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A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

I. ENGLAND IN 1815

II. THE LIBERAL AWAKENING (1815–1830)

III. THE TRIUMPH OF REFORM (1830–1841)

IV. VICTORIAN YEARS (1841–1895)

V. IMPERIALISM AND THE RISE OF LABOUR (1895–1905)

VI. THE RULE OF DEMOCRACY (1905–1914)

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THE RULE OF DEMOCRACY

1905—1914

by

ELIE HALÉVY

Translated from the French by
E. I. WATKIN

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Publisher's Note

This is the second edition of the book originally published as *A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century, Epilogue Vol. II.* The first edition was published as a single book but was split in to two for the 1952 edition; Book I containing Part I and the first two chapters of Part II and Book II the third chapter of Part II and Part III. It is now re-issued in one volume.

Introduction

THIS new volume of my history, or, to speak more accurately, the second and concluding volume of the Epilogue to my history, requires no preface. Though six years have passed since the publication of the previous volume I regard it as the continuation of the former. Certain topics, for instance the development of religious beliefs, I shall treat very briefly, justified in so doing by the fact that I have already said in the previous volume all that I have to say about them. On the other hand, as I pointed out then, I reserved for the present volume the detailed treatment of military and naval questions. I have kept my promise.

There is surely no need to explain why military and above all naval problems assumed a special prominence at the opening of the present century. During the years whose history I relate England was hastening alike 'towards social democracy' and 'towards war'. It was hastening towards both with equal rapidity. We must not be deceived by the noise of party strife. Apparently the Unionists were the party of opposition to Socialism, the Liberals the party prepared to make concessions to Socialism. In reality both parties, stripped of their historic significance, were yielding with a unanimity which was resigned rather than enthusiastic to the pressure of the working masses. Apparently the Unionists were the party of war, the Liberals the party of peace. But when it was a question of voting the credits for which the Admiralty asked, there was no distinction between the two parties. Neither wanted war; both yielded inevitably to the pressure which the increase in the German navy exerted upon the nation. We shall be witnessing a drama whose *dénouement* was predestined from the outset.

For me the drama comes to an abrupt conclusion on the Fourth of August 1914, when England declared war on Germany. I have not attempted in a concluding section to interpret the crisis which began that day not for England alone but for the entire world.

The contribution which I have made to its understanding will be my study of that intermediate period which though it is not the nineteenth century constitutes its epilogue, and while not yet the anxious and troubled century in which we are living to-day is its immediate preparation. The task to which I am impatient to return and to which I propose to devote the remainder of my strength and my life will be the story of that great epoch during which the British people cherished the splendid illusion that they had discovered in a moderate liberty, and not for themselves alone but for every nation that would have the wisdom to follow their example, the secret of moral and of political stability.*

ELIE HALÉVY
June 1932

My thanks are due to Mr. Graham Wallas, Brigadier-General Sir George Aston, K.C.B., Sir Maurice Amos and M. H. Le Masson, who kindly consented to read particular portions of my proofs and thus gave me the invaluable assistance of their expert knowledge in the respective provinces of public education, the organization of the army, the law of marriage, and naval history.

* *Unfortunately Elie Halévy never lived to complete his great task; he died in 1937. The last volume he wrote covered the years 1841-52, thus leaving a gap in his history from the latter year to 1895. This last volume, which first appeared posthumously in 1948, is now published under the title of* Victorian Years *and contains an essay by R. B. McCallum bridging the missing years.* PUBLISHER.

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PART I

PROBLEMS OF LIBERAL POLICY

CHAPTER I

Imperial and Domestic Problems

I TARIFF AND IMPERIAL QUESTIONS

I

WHEN, on December 4, 1905, Balfour tendered to King Edward his own and his colleagues' resignations, there was enacted in the political history of the British nation a rapid drama in two acts. In the first the performers were the handful of statesmen whose task it was to agree upon the composition of the new Liberal Government, in the second the anonymous mass of eight million voters invited in January to give that Government their approval. We shall briefly sketch its episodes.

Balfour's resignation had been undoubtedly determined by the sudden campaign launched against him in November by Chamberlain and his group of uncompromising protectionists. But why had it been launched just at this particular moment? And why did Balfour reply with such an air of eager haste by the resignation of his Cabinet rather than by dissolving Parliament? We may well suspect that recent events at Liberal headquarters were not without their influence upon the actions of the Unionist leaders. Until September, it had been the universal belief that the Liberal Premier would be Lord Spencer, a veteran of the Gladstonian epoch, whose titular sovereignty would give offence to nobody either among the Gladstonians or the Liberal Imperialists. On October 13, however, congestion of the brain had incapacitated him for active work. Who would take his place at the head of the party? Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the pro-Boer, or Lord Rosebery, author of the watchword 'Liberal Imperialism' and founder of the Liberal League? Ever since October the question must have been frequently discussed by Unionist politicians, but when Chamberlain, on November 23, at a meeting of the Liberal Unionist Council called upon Balfour to give a clear pronouncement on the question of Tariff Reform, the quarrel between the two Liberal leaders had already been reopened on another question.

On October 21, Haldane, addressing a public meeting at Edinburgh, declared that the Irish policy of the future Liberal Cabinet would be that of Sir Antony MacDonnell and Wyndham, repu-

diated four months previously by the Unionist Cabinet. Four days later Lord Rosebery employed almost identical language and into the bargain explicitly rejected complete Home Rule. But Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, however, in a speech at Stirling a month later spoke in very different terms. He expressed his wish to see 'the effective management of Irish affairs in the hands of a representative Irish authority', that is to say, he advocated Home Rule, not mere devolution. It is true he advised the Irish to content themselves as a beginning with a measure of more restricted scope but only if this restricted concession 'was consistent and led up to their larger policy', and he stated his conviction that before long the question would receive its final solution. To this utterance Lord Rosebery decided to reply two days later by a formal protest: 'Emphatically and explicitly,' he asseverated, 'once and for all, I cannot serve under that banner,' and declared that on the Irish question he agreed with Haldane. The other leaders of Liberal imperialism—Grey and Asquith—could only reply, in language which betrayed their embarrassment, that they saw no opposition between Campbell-Bannerman's policy and Lord Rosebery's, and that heated controversy about a question which presented no practical urgency was gratuitous.[1] Maintenance of the parliamentary union between Great Britain and Ireland had been the avowed platform on which the Liberal League had been formed in the spring of 1902 in opposition to the old National Liberal Federation. Since then the two groups had become reconciled in the defence of Free Trade. But Rosebery, who for two years had lavished his energies and eloquence upon a series of important orations on behalf of Free Trade, complained bitterly that Campbell-Bannerman was depriving the Liberal party of the benefit of their reconciliation by his persistence in inscribing Irish Home Rule on his programme. Surely at a moment when the issue of a return to protection had placed all others in the shade this resurrection of the Irish question was a welcome omen for the Unionist election agents. And must we not conclude that the spectacle of this dispute confirmed Balfour in his decision to resign as soon as possible that it might be seen whether his opponents

[1] R. B. Haldane, speech at Edinburgh, October 21, 1905; Lord Rosebery, speech at Stourbridge, October 25, 1905; Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, speech at Stirling, November 23, 1905; Lord Rosebery, speech at Bodmin, November 25, 1905; Sir Edward Grey, speech at Newcastle-under-Lyme, November 27, 1905. Cf. Asquith, speech at Wisbech, November 28, 1905.

would be able to compose their internal differences before the General Election?

If this was Balfour's motive he was mistaken on a preliminary point. Campbell-Bannerman's declaration on November 23 on the question of Irish Home Rule had been carefully discussed beforehand not only with a representative of the Irish party, the most moderate and most Anglicized of the group,[1] but also with the most important and at the same time the most moderate of the Liberal imperialist section, namely Asquith.[2] Indeed, you had only to read its terms carefully to see that Campbell-Bannerman's acceptance of the principle of Home Rule did not involve any kind of undertaking to introduce a Home Rule Bill in the new Parliament. It was Lord Rosebery, who, in his violent eagerness to protest, had repudiated what would be the accepted programme of the entire Liberal party save himself. But even now when he had excluded himself by his deliberate choice from the Cabinet about to be formed—it is indeed possible that he had already informed the Liberal leader in October that he did not wish to be included—the Tories did not lack grounds for reckoning upon serious dissensions at Liberal headquarters.[3] It was on the morning of Monday, December 4, that Balfour handed the King his resignation. The same evening Sir Edward Grey called on Sir Henry and informed him that he would be unable to enter his Cabinet unless Sir Henry were willing to quit the House of Commons for the House of Lords. But Grey's haughty ultimatum did not take the prospective Prime Minister by surprise. As early as November 3 we find him calling Asquith's attention to the report that 'that ingenious person, Richard Burdon Haldane,' proposed to dump him on the Upper House. No one was better acquainted with the rumour than Asquith, for it concerned a project he had himself concocted in collaboration with Grey and Haldane and for which they had secured King Edward's explicit approval. Banished to the Lords, Campbell-Bannerman would be a figurehead Prime

[1] T. P. O'Connor, *Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*, 1908, pp. 72–5.

[2] Sir Sidney Lee, *King Edward the Seventh: A Biography*, 1925–7, vol. ii, p. 441.

[3] For the formation of the Cabinet see J. A. Spender, *The Life of the Right Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman* (1923), vol. ii, pp. 188–204; Margot Asquith, *Autobiography* (1920), vol. ii, pp. 71 sqq; Richard Burdon Haldane, *An Autobiography* (1929), pp. 168 sqq.; J. A. Spender and Cyril Asquith, *Life of Herbert Henry Asquith, Lord Oxford and Asquith* (1932), vol. i, pp. 169 sqq; Lord Morley (*Recollections*, 1917, vol. ii, pp. 140–3); Lord Grey of Fallodon (*Twenty-Five Years*, 1892–1926, vol. i, pp. 62–3) and Sir Sidney Lee (*King Edward VII*, vol. ii, pp. 441–5) are extremely sketchy. See further the interesting details published in the *Nation*, June 4, 1921, by Gardiner.

Minister. The functions of party leadership would in fact be exercised by Asquith in the House of Commons. Sir Edward Grey would be in charge of the Foreign Office. Haldane would be Lord Chancellor, and not only would he preside in that capacity over the House of Lords but his functions would be so extended that in conjunction with the Premier he would exercise a control over the general policy of the country. Behind this staff of imperialists no one would notice a Prime Minister, by no means a marked personality, who was opposed to the policy of force and national prestige.

There were plausible arguments which could be presented to Sir Henry to dissuade him from undertaking the double task of Prime Minister and leader of the Lower House. Now seventy years old, he had never been a hard worker and for several months past his health had been seriously affected. He had just returned from a long rest cure at Marienbad. King Edward, who had met him there, advised him on Monday the 4th to spare his health, remarking that neither of them was a young man. But Sir Henry stood firm. If his health made it necessary, he would accept a peerage later, but he wished at any rate to open the session of 1906 not only as Prime Minister but as leader of the Commons. Weary of argument he postponed his decision, since his health was the objection put forward, until he could consult Lady Campbell-Bannerman on her arrival from Scotland. If the imperialist members of the party counted on her womanly fears to urge her husband to leave the Commons, they were disappointed. She loathed the clique and decided in favour of a firm front. Was the Tory opposition to have at least the satisfaction of seeing Asquith, Grey, and Haldane refuse to enter the Cabinet, since their terms had been rejected? So *The Times* believed, and raised a pæan of triumph. But the very morning the article appeared, Friday, December 8, the situation took another turn. Asquith had yielded and accepted the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer without the leadership of the Commons. Deserted by him, could Sir Edward Grey and Haldane carry on their strike? Grey seemed inclined to that course, but the 'ingenious' Haldane persuaded him to accept Campbell-Bannerman as leader, if Sir Henry would consent to give the Foreign Office to Grey, the War Office to Haldane himself. Sir Henry willingly granted Haldane an office whose importance he failed to realize. In the Foreign Office, on the other

hand, he would have preferred anyone rather than Grey. But when Lord Cromer, to whom he first offered it, refused on grounds of health, he felt obliged to give way. Thus at the end of the week the Liberal imperialists had partially made good the reverse they had suffered at its beginning. They had not indeed banished Campbell-Bannerman to the Lords, but in the Treasury, the War Office, and the Foreign Office they held three offices of the first importance. I remarked one day to a prominent member of the group how easy it is to date the birth of a political association, how difficult to determinate the date of its demise; what publicity, for example, had attended the formation of the Liberal League in 1902 and how mysteriously it had vanished later. 'But the Liberal League', he replied, 'did not vanish. What happened is simply that in 1905 it absorbed the Liberal Government. That is why we went to war in 1914.'

This serious difficulty once overcome nothing prevented the formation of the Government. And formed it was on December 11. It contained in all fifty-six members, of whom twenty were in the Cabinet. The old Gladstonians were gratified by the appointment of Sir Robert Reid as Lord Chancellor, with the title of Lord Loreburn, of Herbert Gladstone, the statesman's son, to the Home Office, and of John Morley to the India Office. Bryce, the eminent historian, who had entertained hopes of the latter, found himself obliged to yield to Morley's claim and content himself with the unenviable post of Chief Secretary for Ireland. Lloyd George went to the Board of Trade. He had expected a more important ministry, was indeed believed to have entertained hopes of immediate promotion to the Home Office.[1] Winston Churchill received the first reward of his desertion from the Tories and became Under-Secretary for the Colonies (the Secretaryship itself was given to a peer, Lord Elgin). Augustine Birrell, a talented man of letters, went to the Board of Education. To attract the sympathies of the working class the Local Government Board was given to John Burns, who, although he had not accepted the programme of the Labour Representation Com-

[1] J. Hugh Edwards, *The Life of David Lloyd George*, vol. iv, p. 60—Campbell-Bannerman gave him the option between the Post Office and the Board of Trade. He chose the latter, which, though the salary was less, gave more scope to its occupant. His Welsh friends would seem to have dreamed of the creation in his favour of a special 'Secretaryship for Wales' analogous to the Secretaryship for Scotland. (J. Hugh Edwards, *From Village Green to Downing Street: The Life of the Right Honourable D. Lloyd George*, p. 139.)

mittee, could claim to be a Socialist of long standing and was of proletarian origin.

2

Thus the Liberals, though banished from office for over ten years, had successfully solved as expert politicians all the problems raised by the constitution of a Government. They had avoided a split between the Gladstonians and the imperialists. That Lord Rosebery's name was absent from their list hardly mattered: public opinion had become accustomed to regard this haughty aristocrat as permanently retired. And though the opposition refused to admit it, they had formed an administration far superior in the individual worth of its members to that which had just resigned. But although Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was now Prime Minister and leader of the Commons, the Unionist politicians cherished a forlorn hope. For the second act of the drama had still to be played. Within a few weeks, the Liberals must confront the electorate. They would emerge victorious. Of that there was no doubt. But what would be the extent of their victory? It must surely damage their cause to take the field under the command of a prominent pro-Boer, whose sole recommendation to the notice of the public was the fact that during the late war he had made common cause with men notorious as enemies of their country? Even in the Liberal camp it was regarded as dangerous to speculate on the basis of the numerous by-elections won during the past year. At a by-election voters freely allow themselves the pleasure of giving the Government a slap in the face, because they know their gesture can have no serious consequences. The utmost that could be hoped for was a majority of a hundred over the Unionists, just sufficient to prevent the eighty Irish Nationalists from dictating their terms. And many Unionists expected a less decisive result. Chamberlain prophesied that the Liberal majority would not exceed eighty, would be at the mercy of the Irish members, and that the swing of the pendulum would not be long delayed.[1]

[1] *The Autobiography of Mrs. Asquith*, vol. ii, pp. 58–9, 80. For other forecasts see the *National Review*, December 1905, vol. xlvi, p. 789, 'The Liberal Letter'; An Intercepted Letter (an imaginary letter from Campbell-Bannerman intercepted and sent to the *Review* by the Fabian Society): 'The Central Office tells me that the Conservatives of all shades cannot have more than 245 members to our 340, which gives us anyhow a clear

At this period the elections were not completed in a single day. They lasted a fortnight, and the order in which they were held ensured the Liberals from the outset an easy victory. After an isolated election at Ipswich, where they gained a seat, ten Lancashire constituencies were summoned on the following day, January 13, to elect their representatives. In 1900 all had returned Unionist members, Balfour at their head. Now all returned Liberals or Labour men, 6 Liberals and 4 Labour. And these victories were the more sensational because in several instances the successful Liberal had been faced not only with a Unionist opponent but with a Socialist as well. It was in vain that Balfour had prevaricated, and the other Unionist candidates declared against a tariff on foodstuffs—all had been irremediably compromised by Chamberlain's propaganda. It was undoubtedly a misfortune for the Unionists that the first boroughs to vote were situated in the holy land of Free Trade. But the same day in a number of other manufacturing constituencies where the Tariff Reformers flattered themselves that their propaganda had been more successful, the result was the same. The initial impulse once given, Liberal victories followed in unbroken succession so long as the borough elections continued. In London, which in 1900 had returned 8 Liberals as against 51 Unionists, 40 Liberals and Labour men were returned, and only 19 Unionists. In the remaining boroughs of England the respective positions of the two parties were almost exactly reversed. In 1900 40 Liberal members had been returned as against 127 Unionists, now 124 Liberals as against 43 Unionists. In Wales, the Unionists lost even the tiny minority returned at the last election; all the 11 representatives of the Welsh boroughs

majority, even on the rare occasions when Redmond can get over all his 85 to vote against us. And this majority of the whole House may be even as high as 70.' Lord Hugh Cecil to Mrs. Asquith, December 21, 1905: '. . . My guess is that your party will come back 230—giving you a majority of about 40 over us and the Irish together' (*The Autobiography of Mrs. Asquith*, vol. ii, p. 78). *The Times*, January 13, 1906: '137 seats lately held by Unionists will have to be captured by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's supporters to give him a majority of 40 in the House of Commons over Unionists and Nationalists combined, whereas the great revulsion of 1895, which transformed Lord Rosebery's preponderance of 31 into a majority for Lord Salisbury of 153, was accompanied by a reversal of the previous verdict in 92 cases only.' The *Daily Mail* of December 27 ventures the following forecast: 'Conservatives and Unionists 247; Liberals 297; Labour (including Liberal-Labour) 35; Nationalists 81.' Cf. John Morley, speech at Forfar, January 10, 1906: 'This General Election is the most exciting within my experience, and probably for nearly sixty years, with the possible exception of that on Home Rule in 1886. There are three current predictions: (1) The Liberals, as in 1885, will be equal to the Tories and Nationalists combined; (2) The Unionists will number only 200; (3) The Government will have a majority of thirty or forty over the joint forces of the Tories and Nationalists.'

were Liberals. In Scotland, the Liberals reconquered the supremacy they had appeared to be losing for some years past. Instead of fifteen to sixteen, they were twenty-five to six.

On the 19th, when the borough elections were almost at an end, the county elections began. If, owing to the growth of the suburbs of large towns or the development of mining, some of these constituencies had become urban and industrial, the majority were rural, and the Unionists might well hope by maintaining their position here to mitigate the disaster which had befallen them in the boroughs. But it soon became clear that even in these areas the tide would sweep away the last dykes behind which the old Conservative party was entrenched. The agricultural labourers from dislike of the landlords and farmers, the farmers from dislike of the Education Act which had made the rates heavier, and the electors generally disgusted with a Government of aristocrats and dilettanti which had shown itself incompetent either to preserve peace or make war and after the conclusion of peace had given no proof that it had learnt the lessons of the war, voted for the Liberals. The old County families who constituted the picturesque element of the Unionist party saw themselves deserted by those whom until the dawn of the new century they had been pleased to regard as attached to themselves by a tie amounting to moral serfdom. In Dorset a Bathurst was defeated, a Kenyon in Derbyshire, a Lowther in Cumberland. Chaplin, for the last ten years Minister for Agriculture and a Lincolnshire member for thirty-two years, lost his seat. The sole comfort left to the Unionists was the fact that their defeat was not so overwhelming as in the towns. In England the counties returned 74 Liberals and 60 Unionists, in Scotland 35 Liberals and 4 Unionists; in Wales all the 19 members were Liberals.

To sum up, the new House of Commons contained 430 Liberal and Labour members, 157 Unionists, 83 Irish Nationalists. If from the 50 working-class representatives returned we subtract those who, having accepted the nomination of the Labour Representation Committee, might claim to be regarded as a group apart, there were 401 Liberals, 157 Unionists, 29 Labour members, 83 Nationalists. Any lingering hopes Unionist headquarters may have entertained on the eve of the polls had been dissipated. The Government majority was so vast that, even if the Liberals were deserted by their Labour and Irish allies, they could still dispose of

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130 more votes than the hostile combination. The only strongholds remaining in Unionist hands were the wealthy districts of London, a certain number of seats in the agricultural counties of the South (Kent, Sussex, etc.), Birmingham and its environs, where Chamberlain reigned supreme, and Liverpool, where, no doubt, the violent anti-Irish sentiment checked the Liberal advance. To find a similar electoral landslide we must go back to the General Election of 1833, which followed the passage of the first Reform Bill, and it was indeed a revolution of the same kind which was taking place at present. The paradoxical feature of the situation was that the reforms of the franchise effected as long ago as 1867 and 1884 had not borne fruit until now. Anti-Irish panics, waves of imperialist enthusiasm, the failure of the old Gladstonian party to understand the aspirations of the working masses, had kept the Conservatives in office. Their power was now a thing of the past and many, who, after 1895, had been inclined to write the Liberal party off as annihilated for the next half century, now regarded 1906 as the year one of a new era, an era of Liberalism regenerate and democratic. In the new House there were only sixteen bankers in place of fifty in the previous Parliament, and twenty-one members of railway directorates as against fifty-three.[1] There were 310 new members, almost half the total membership. And of these 310, 220 were Liberals, well-nigh three-quarters of the party representation. Among these 220 were a large number of young men, intellectuals, journalists, university professors, champions of all those eccentric causes which arouse the enthusiasm of British philanthropy. They had stood for election or allowed themselves to be put up simply in order that as far as possible the Liberal vote might be taken in every constituency. Now they found themselves returned, often to their utter amazement. On what platform? This is the question we must now examine. For the new members felt, no doubt, some difficulty in analysing the movement of vague enthusiasm which had landed them at Westminster.

3

The programme on which the new majority had been returned was undoubtedly first and foremost purely negative opposition

[1] *The Times*, February 1, 1906.

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to tariff reform which the Liberals regarded as reactionary. Chamberlain had intended to give the Election the character of a referendum on the question, and the overwhelming majority obtained by the opposite party seemed a hostile verdict upon his policy from which for many a year to come there could be no appeal. But although a number of long-established Conservative organs in the provinces charged him with precipitating the Conservative defeat by his insubordination and intemperance, he obviously retained the sympathy, secret or avowed, of the London party press and the vast majority of provincial Conservative papers. The Conservative defeat, his supporters maintained, was due to the fact that Chamberlain had been compelled to play a lone hand, while the old families with Balfour at their head monopolized the official leadership of the party. The consequence was that the party had lost touch with the mass of the electorate. A new organization and a new programme were indispensable. Though he inspired this campaign, Chamberlain dared not claim the leadership of the party. The established Conservative hierarchy was too powerful. Relying, however, on the fact that of the hundred and fifty Unionists returned to the new Parliament, over a hundred had been elected on the full programme of imperial protection, he called upon Balfour to adopt it. On February 15 the papers published two letters exchanged between the official and the unofficial Unionist leaders. In the first of these Balfour informed Chamberlain that he considered fiscal reform 'should be the first constructive work of the Unionist Party', demanded 'more equal terms of competition for British trade, and closer commercial union with the Colonies', and admitted that 'the imposition of a general tariff of a moderate character upon manufactured articles and a light duty on imported cereals were not in principle objectionable' and 'should be adopted if shown to be necessary for the attainment of the ends in view or for purposes of revenue'. He was indeed careful to add that the new duties must not be imposed 'for the purpose of raising prices or giving artificial protection against legitimate competition'. And he added that to protect the British export trade and tighten the economic bonds between the mother country and the Colonies 'may be possible by other means', and that 'it is inexpedient to permit differences of opinion as to these methods to divide the party'. But these reservations did not alter the fact that by placing tariff reform upon

the official programme of the party on the morrow of the *débâcle* at the polls, he had surrendered to Chamberlain. In any case, it was in this sense that Chamberlain interpreted Balfour's letter, which, he said, 'he cordially welcomed'. The following day, February 16, the reconciliation between the two leaders was sealed by a plenary assembly of the party at Lansdowne House.

Could it however be regarded as complete? Were its terms unambiguous? Balfour had no doubt accepted Chamberlain's programme in principle and that was a great deal. But he had attached to his acceptance so many reservations that their common enemies were tempted to put to the test an alliance at the best of times weak. On March 12 a member of the ministerialist majority in the Commons invited the House to pass a resolution declaring its determination 'to resist any proposal whether by way of taxation upon foreign goods, to create in this country a system of protection'. Balfour, thus driven to bay and compelled either to defend Chamberlain's entire programme or reject it categorically, evaded the issue by a speech as ambiguous, complicated, and 'balfourian' as possible. When he had finished, the Premier did not rise to reply. When, however, Chamberlain interposed to charge him with a breach of parliamentary etiquette, Campbell-Bannerman decided to speak. His speech was brief and incisive. He denounced Balfour's speech as 'futile, nonsensical, and misleading', 'only justifiable if his object had been to waste the time of the House'. 'I say, enough of this foolery. It might have answered very well in the last Parliament, but it is altogether out of place in this Parliament. The tone and temper of this Parliament will not permit it. Move your Amendments, and let us get to business.' So these two statesmen—Balfour and Campbell-Bannerman—faced each other on the floor of the House, the former unanimously regarded as a great artist, and a master of fence, the prince of the House of Commons, the latter an honourable man no doubt, but a bourgeois far from keen-witted and without prestige as a debater. And it was the obtuse bourgeois, who, at the first passage of arms, established his authority over the newly elected Parliament by informing his adversary amid the applause of his majority that he considered him a sophist and refused to waste his time by listening to him. There was indeed a third statesman to oppose Campbell-Bannerman—namely, Chamberlain himself—whose imprudent intervention had provoked the Prime Minister's withering reply.

Would he not very shortly give his party its revenge by employing more direct methods better suited to a democratic audience? On this point we are reduced to conjecture, for in July he suddenly disappeared from public life, a victim to the disease which made him a permanent invalid and a paralytic. But it is not likely that his ardour would have succeeded, where Balfour's subtlety had failed. The situation was too unfavourable to protectionist propaganda.

When the advocates of tariff reform opened their campaign in 1903, they had reckoned on a period of economic depression and industrial stagnation. For after three or four years of prosperity, the bad years before 1898 seemed to be returning. Their calculation had been falsified by the event. The years 1904 and 1905 had been prosperous. 1906 was better still. Imports rose from £565,020,000 to £607,889,000, an increase of 7.6 per cent; exports from £329,817,000 to £375,575,000, an increase of 13 per cent. This double increase was not wholly an increase in the amount of goods imported and exported. For there had been a general rise of prices. But there was one class of products in which this rise had not taken place. Owing to an excellent harvest throughout the entire world the price of cereals had fallen. The rise in wages therefore had not been balanced by a rise in the cost of foodstuffs. Employers and workers alike—with the solitary exception of the landowners and their farmers—were satisfied. The complaints of the tariff reformers found no echo in the world of industry.

4

The sole resource left to the defeated Unionists was to scrutinize every detail of the Government's policy, to surprise and exploit some lapse, some concession voluntary or involuntary to their ideas. Lloyd George, the new President of the Board of Trade, twice presented them with an opportunity.

The first occasion was in 1906 when an important statute was passed dealing with the mercantile marine.[1] The shipowners had taken advantage of the protectionist movement which marked the last years of the Unionist Government to bring forward two

[1] 6 Edw. 7, Cap. 48: An Act to amend the Merchant Shipping Acts 1894 to 1900 (*Merchant Shipping Act*, 1906).

distinct grievances. To examine them the Government had appointed two Committees of inquiry.[1] Both complained of the increasing number of foreign seamen employed in the mercantile marine. But a remedy was not easy to find. It was impossible to dispense with these men, especially in tropical waters, and the difficulty was all the greater because the non-British seamen, the Lascars, were Indians and therefore British subjects. The first and the more important of the Committees had recommended stricter regulations to ensure the crews better conditions on board—for example, better sleeping accommodation and food, and so attract a larger number of Englishmen to the service. This recommendation was very largely carried out by the Act of 1906. It had further recommended the introduction of a rule by which sailors in the merchant service must know sufficient English to understand orders in that language. On this point also the Act of 1906 carried out its recommendation. Actually, in the course of the debates, an amendment more directly hostile to the foreigner was inserted in the Statute. Pilots' certificates would in future be granted only to Englishmen. The shipowners had also complained that since for the past twenty years they had been subject to very strict regulations as to the amount of cargo and life-saving apparatus, it was not just to allow foreign vessels not subject to these regulations by their national laws to compete with theirs in British ports. A second Committee was appointed to investigate the question and, so far as existing international agreements permitted, its recommendations were incorporated into the Statute of 1906. The Act subjected as far as possible foreign vessels entering British ports to the regulations imposed on British vessels by English law. Of these new provisions, some, as we have seen, were obviously nationalist in character, the others, however justifiable they might appear, abandoned the orthodoxy of free trade. Foreign vessels were indeed permitted to compete with British, but only if their competition was on an equal footing. This was all the fair traders had asked for. They were quite ready to accept free trade on equal terms.

In 1907, Lloyd George took a more decided step in the direction

[1] Report of the Committees appointed by the Board of Trade to inquire into certain questions affecting the Mercantile Marine, with minutes of evidence, appendices and index, 1902 (Lord St. Helier's Committee)—Report from the Select Committee on Foreign Ships (Application of Statutory Powers) together with the Proceedings of the Committee, minutes of evidence and appendix, 1904 (Bonar Law's Committee).

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of fair trade. For some years the question of patents had been causing anxiety to English manufacturers and the officials of the Board of Trade. Too many foreign firms, especially American and German, had taken out patents in England, often deliberately drawn up in complicated and obscure language, to prevent British industry using particular methods or machinery, or permitting their use only on payment of a royalty. The extent of the evil can be gauged from the fact that of 14,700 patents granted in 1906, 6,500 were granted to foreigners. A Committee had been appointed in 1901 to examine the problem.[1] Its report led to the passing of a Statute in 1902[2] with the object of enabling an inventor, injured by a patent wilfully misdrafted, to obtain redress from the courts. It proved inoperative. A Lancashire manufacturer brought a test case. It cost him £4,000. To a poor inventor such costs were prohibitive. The Patents and Designs Act[3] of 1907 was a more thoroughgoing measure. Not only was the procedure for modifying patents made simpler and therefore cheaper, but other provisions were laid down. In future the government would be entitled to cancel a patent, if within three years of the grant it had not been used in the United Kingdom. All applications for a patent must be accompanied by the production of specimens. And measures were taken to put an end to the system of leases which tended to subject British industry to foreign control. 'I am not afraid of foreign competition', Lloyd George declared, 'as long as British trade is free to fight it. . . . British industry shall be made perfectly free to engage on equal terms in the severe struggle with its competitors.' The German Press raised the cry of protection. From the opposition benches ironical congratulations were showered on Lloyd George. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Bill of 1907 had been prepared and its clauses worked out by the Board of Trade, before the advent of the Liberal Government, at the

[1] *Patent Acts.* Reports of the Committee appointed by the Board of Trade to inquire into the working of the Patents Acts on certain specified questions, 1901.

[2] Edw. 7, Cap. 34: An Act to amend the Law with reference to Application for Patents and Compulsory Licences and other matters connected therewith (*Patents Act*, 1902).

[3] 7 Edw. 7, Cap. 28: An Act to amend the Law relating to Patents and Designs (Amendment) Act, 1907. It was repealed immediately and incorporated into a comprehensive Statute which consolidated all former patent Acts. 7 Edw. 7, Cap. 29: An Act to consolidate the enactments relating to Patents for Invention and the Registration of Designs and certain enactments relating to Trade Marks (*Patents and Designs Act*, 1907). For the spirit of the new Act see Lloyd George's speech H. of C. March 19, 1907 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 9th Series, vol. clxxi, pp. 683 sqq.); also his speech on the second reading of the Bill, H. of C., April 17, 1907 (ibid., vol. clxxii, pp. 1042 sqq.).

demand of a group of industries whose leaders at least shared Chamberlain's views. Were not the Unionists entitled to surmise, as some actually did, that this young minister whom they detested so bitterly might perhaps follow one day in the footsteps of that other great demagogue, the protagonist of tariff reform? Lloyd George was certainly no doctrinaire and, more attached to democracy than free trade, was perhaps glad to prove in these early days of the new Parliament that he was not enslaved to the old formulas of Gladstonian orthodoxy.[1] But this was a very slender foundation for believing that he would shortly join the protectionists. One thing was certain; he had no political inducement to take the step. He shared his colleagues' perception that it was politics to leave the Unionist party to bear the responsibility for Chamberlain's new programme and to confront it with the alternative of disavowing it, which would leave them without a positive programme to oppose to the Liberals—or frankly adopting it as their platform, and thereby courting defeat at the polls.

We must not, therefore, ascribe to the Merchant Shipping or the Patent Acts the importance assigned to them by contemporary Unionist speakers and journalists. We must, on the contrary, draw attention to the measures ostentatiously adopted by the Government to retrace the few steps taken by its predecessor on the path of protection, tentatives so misconceived and blundering that its task was easy.

5

The Budget of 1906 abandoned the £2,000,000 yielded by the export duty on coal imposed in 1901 which had the air of an indirect concession to protectionist principles. But on what grounds could the duty be rationally defended? Its authors had argued from the necessity of preserving the reserves of coal in British soil indispensable to British industry but by no means inexhaustible. A Royal Commission, however, appointed after the

[1] Trustworthy witnesses tell us that Campbell-Bannerman was personally antipathetic to him (*New Statesman*, April 3, 1920). But the statement of his biographer, E. T. Raymond (*Mr. Lloyd George: A Biography*, 1922, p. 90), that in 1896 he had proposed a reduction of the duty upon tea grown in the Empire is based on a misunderstanding of this Parliamentary incident. Chamberlain, who was in office, had just declared in favour of an imperial *Zollverein* and Lloyd George's sole object in introducing the amendment was to embarrass Lord Salisbury's Government by compelling it to accept or reject his proposal (H. of C., July 7, 1896, *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. xlii, pp. 935, 943).

imposition of the duty to undertake a comprehensive study of the problems connected with the coal-mining industry in Great Britain, had reached the conclusion that the supply of coal was in no proximate danger of exhaustion.[1] There were a hundred thousand million tons of coal to be raised, and the annual output of the mines in England, Wales and Scotland was only two hundred and thirty million.[2] It had been argued that British industry would obtain its coal on better terms if export were rendered more difficult. The expectation, however, was not fulfilled at a time when the price of coal was rising like all other prices, and the opposition thus introduced between the interests of the manufacturing consumers and the miners sharpened the hostility of the huge mining electorate to the duty of 1901. The supporters of tariff reform could only retort that if, as the opposition implicitly admitted, the British producer suffered from the imposition of this export duty, it would be the foreign producer, not the British consumer, who would suffer from the imposition of duties on imports.[3] This logic-chopping represented the entire opposition of Unionist speakers during the debates on the Budget. The theorists of free trade, the miners, and the powerful group constituted by the merchant service were united in opposition to the export duty on coal. In fact, the opposition was a mere formality: Austen Chamberlain, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the late Cabinet, had already promised to abolish it.[4]

In 1907 a more important step was taken in the same direction. On June 6, Sir Edward Grey, in his capacity as Foreign Secretary, informed the permanent international Sugar Commission that the British Government could no longer continue to participate in the

[1] A Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the extent and available resources of the coalfields of the United Kingdom; the rate of exhaustion which may be anticipated, having regard to possible economies in use by the substitution of other fuel, or the adoption of other kinds of power; the effect of our exports of coal on the home supply, and the time for which that supply, especially of the more valuable kinds of coal, will probably be available to British consumers, including the Royal Navy, at a cost which would not be detrimental to the general welfare; the possibility of a reduction in that cost, by cheaper transport, or by the avoidance of unnecessary waste in working through the adoption of better methods and improved appliances, or through a change in the customary terms and provisions of mineral leases, and whether the mining industry of this country, under existing conditions, is maintaining its competitive power with the coalfields of other countries, 1900. *First Report*, 1903; *Second Report*, 1904; *Final Report*, 1905.

[2] *Final Report*, p. 6.

[3] H. of C. April 30, 1906, Joseph Chamberlain's speech (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. xlv, pp. 560–1).

[4] H. of C., April 30, 1906, Fenwick's speech (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. xlv, p. 327). Joseph Chamberlain's speech (ibid., iv, pp. 459–60).

Union under the conditions imposed by the Brussels agreement, since the agreement was 'inconsistent with their declared policy, and incompatible with the interests of British consumers and sugar-using manufacturers', and claimed for Great Britain freedom from the obligation to subject sugar which had received a bounty to the retaliatory duties it prescribed. On July 25, the Commission met at Brussels and in two days drew up the draft of an agreement supplementing the convention of 1902, which was ratified on August 28 by the adhesion of all the contracting powers. It suspended the international union for five years from September 1, 1908, and freed Great Britain during that period from the obligation to penalize sugar in receipt of a bounty, the other contracting powers merely reserving the right to require that any sugar refined in the United Kingdom and exported to their territory should be accompanied by a guarantee that no portion of it came from a country which accorded a bounty for the growth or treatment of sugar.

The Tariff Reformers protested, and their protests were similar to those they had made against the abolition of the export duty on coal. They amounted to no more than the argument that the Brussels convention had not produced all the ill-effects foretold by the Free Traders. The quantity of raw sugar imported, far from decreasing, had increased by 15 per cent. The export of confectionery had increased and had never before reached so high a figure. The plantations of cane sugar in the West Indies had been saved, which however did not prevent some manufacturers from making preparations to introduce the sugar beet industry into England. Unionist speakers further taunted the measure with being a compromise. If the Government wished to keep its election promises, why was there not a complete rupture with the international Commission?[1]

Nothing came of their protests. The Liberals had promised the electorate cheap sugar, and the pledge was fulfilled by the Brussels compromise. The Convention of 1902 was not calculated to win the British voter to the cause of tariff reform. For the only British producer it protected was not English or Scottish but the West Indian planter. The object of the Unionist Cabinet in signing it had been, by saving the West Indian colonies from ruin,

[1] H. of C., July 30, 1907 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxix, pp. 799 sqq.), H. of C., August 1, 1907 (ibid., vol. clxxix, pp. 1240 sqq.).

to inculcate in the British public the belief in a solidarity of interests between the mother country and her Colonies. The problem of free trade was thus bound up with that of imperial unity. Chamberlain's revived protectionism was not and was not intended to be a parochial protection of the interests of the mother country alone; it aimed at an imperial protection, the protection of Greater Britain as a whole against the outside world. From this point of view Chamberlain had bequeathed to the new Government a legacy of singular difficulty. It was all very well for the majority of the new ministers to proclaim their opposition to imperialism; they could not escape responsibility for the settlement of imperial problems. Their anti-imperialism signified at most their unwillingness to increase a burden of responsibility, already overwhelming, by further conquests, and their belief in the desirability of applying more liberal methods in ruling the hosts of nations and races subject to the British Crown and thus perhaps consolidating the Empire by liberalizing it.

6

In April, 1907, after an interval of five years, the Colonial Conference met in London.[1] The Liberal Government did nothing to diminish the solemnity of the proceedings. Campbell-Bannerman was at pains to lay to rest any suspicions of an intransigent Little Englandism, to which his attitude during the Boer War might have given rise. He invited the Prime Ministers of the Self-Governing Colonies to his official residence in Downing Street and made the reception as imposing as he could. A special table was put up which had the shape of an E to symbolize the Empire by its very form. Above the Premier's head a likeness of Pitt lit by a projector presided over the meeting. By an innovation which did not pass unremarked, he did not leave it to the Colonial Secretary to open the proceedings, but made the opening speech himself, a profession of faith at once imperialist and Liberal. No

[1] For the preparations for the Conference and its work, see *Colonial Conference*, 1907; Despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, with enclosures respecting the *Agenda of the Colonial Conference*, 1907 (1907); Correspondence relating to the Colonial Conference 1907 in continuance of (1907); Published Proceedings and Précis of the Colonial Conference 15th to 26th April, 1907 (1907); *Minutes and Proceedings of the Colonial Conference*, 1907. See further Richard Jebb, *The Imperial Conference: A History and a Study*, 1911, vol. ii, pp. 68 sqq.

question, he said, must be excluded from discussion, and the fact that the British Government might on one point or another find itself in disagreement with a particular Colony would not weaken the bonds of friendship which united them. Paying an ironical tribute to the statesman who had sought to cement the bond of imperial unity by commercializing it, he quoted the words in which Chamberlain had spoken of the 'sentimental' character of the tie which bound the mother country to her Colonies. In fact, the question of granting or refusing a 'preference' to the Colonies was the most important of those discussed at the Conference.

The Australian Commonwealth, New Zealand, and Cape Colony, whose Government was at the moment in the hands of imperialists of British origin, put forward resolutions advocating a system of mutual preferential tariffs between the various Self-Governing Colonies and the United Kingdom. The Prime Minister of the Commonwealth was a vehement supporter of Chamberlain's project. Alone the Canadian premier, Sir Wilfred Laurier, held aloof. Like his party, the Liberal party of Canada, he was committed to a fiscal policy entirely independent of the rest of the Empire, and reciprocity not with Britain but the United States.[1] What arguments did the other premiers bring forward? It was no longer possible, as it had been possible three or four years earlier, to argue that since the growth of commerce was more rapid between the mother country and her Colonies than between the mother country and the rest of the world, a system of preferential tariffs followed the natural line of historical development. Unfortunately for that argument the statistics for the past year yielded diametrically opposite results. But this did not prevent Chamberlain's supporters from making use of them. England, they argued, sent too much capital and too many immigrants to the United States, not enough to Canada and the other parts of the Empire. If, however, by an artificial system of protection

[1] For the Canadian tariff of 1907 sanctioned by the Ottawa Parliament on the very eve of the Conference see Edward Porritt, *Sixty Years of Protection in Canada, 1846–1907: Where Industry Leans on the Politician*, 1908, pp. 421 sqq. (written from the free-trade standpoint). For the negotiations for a treaty of reciprocity which the Canadian Government proceeded to open with the Government of the United States and which the intransigence of Congress rendered abortive, see H. A. L. Fisher, *James Bryce (Viscount Bryce of Dechmont, O.M.)*, vol. ii, pp. 62 sqq. See also Edward Porritt, *The Revolt in Canada against the New Feudalism*; *Tariff History from the Revision of 1907 to the Uprising of the West in 1910*, 1911 (well documented but resembling too closely a pamphlet in favour of free trade).

commerce could be diverted into colonial channels, capital and human labour would follow in the same direction; from every standpoint therefore they would be assisting the progress of the Empire.[1]

The hopes of these Self-Governing Colonies were damped by the opposition of three ministers. Asquith, speaking as Chancellor of the Exchequer, made the pronouncement in favour of the official free-trade orthodoxy which might have been expected from him. He refused to inquire whether Cobden had regarded British free trade as the prelude to universal. If he remained loyal to free trade it was because he believed it was demanded by the special and immediate interests of the British people. Lloyd George disappointed any hopes which his Merchant Shipping and Patent Bills might have aroused by defending the principle of free trade in terms as uncompromising as Asquith's. Since Winston Churchill was only Under-Secretary for the Colonies he might have kept silence. As a convert from Toryism, however, and, like all converts, suspect in both camps, he thought it necessary to state his position and put forward political arguments in favour of the complete fiscal independence of the mother country in regard to her Colonies. We have already had occasion to appreciate their gravity. Sentiments of deep affection united the different parts of the Empire and, if the mother country attempted to dictate to a Colony, or conversely, if a Colony attempted to dictate to her, the fiscal system to be adopted, everlasting conflicts of interest would result. The effect would be to weaken, not, as was hoped, consolidate imperial sentiment.

At that very moment a number of disputes brought home the danger of attempting to give a systematic form to a union which continued somehow to function in total disorganization. Asquith and Lloyd George declared their intention to do everything in their power to foster commerce between the different parts of the Empire. This, however, was not always an easy task, and the obstacles did not arise exclusively from the attitude of the mother

[1] 'Four-fifths of the capital which had built up the industries and the railways of the United States had gone from the City of London. When he thought of that, and that Canada had hardly been able to get the money to build a single line of railway across her continent, he regretted that they had not forty or fifty years ago awakened from the lethargy from which he was glad to say that they had now awakened' (Sir F. Borden: speech delivered at a banquet given by the Eighty Club to the Colonial Prime Ministers April 16, 1907).

country. It was because of the Australian Government that Imperial Penny Postage, already in operation throughout almost the whole of the Empire, did not yet extend to Australia.[1] It was all very well for Canada to advertise loudly the project of an All-Red Route between England and Australia via Montreal and Vancouver. Australia showed no enthusiasm for this piece of imperialism but put forward in London a totally different scheme, the organization of a line of rapid communications between Australia and England which would not touch Canada.[2] Moreover, for more than ten years an open conflict had existed between the mother country and the Self-Governing Colonies about the laws controlling merchant shipping and the coasting trade. In 1894, when the Liberals were in office, they had dared to violate the principle of colonial home rule, and the Parliament of Great Britain had passed a Merchant Shipping Bill[3] which, while it conferred on the colonial legislatures full powers to prescribe the conditions of coasting trade, imposed the twofold reservation that any such legislation must place British vessels on an equal footing with colonial, and must not conflict with any right granted by British treaties to foreign states. But the constitution granted six years later to Australia gave the Australian Parliament unlimited jurisdiction in this sphere.[4] This at least was the interpretation placed upon the Act in Australia. Accordingly, the Commonwealth Parliament passed in 1904 a Statute whose provisions were in conflict with those of the British Act of 1894. And in 1903, New Zealand overrode the restrictions laid down in the Act of 1894 without even troubling like Australia to justify her action by an appeal to the text of her constitution.[5] In London, a Commission[6] appointed to inquire into the Australian Statute and in particular to determine how far it was authorized by the Commonwealth Act of 1900 referred the examination of the question to a 'mari-

[1] *Colonial Conference, 1907: Minutes of Proceedings*, p. 599.

[2] Ibid., pp. 565 sqq. *The Economist* June 22, 1907, p. 1058; April 11, 1908, pp. 768, 770: 'The All-Red Route will get neither freight nor immigrants; it must pay its way on saloon passengers.'

[3] 57 & 58 Vict., Cap. 60: An Act to consolidate Enactments relating to Merchant Shipping (*Merchant Shipping Act*, 1894).

[4] 63 & 64 Vict., Cap. 12: An Act to constitute the Commonwealth of Australia (*Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act*), 1900, Sec. 98.

[5] For the Australian Acts see *Australia, New Zealand, Correspondence relating to Merchant Shipping Legislation in Australia and New Zealand 1905*, pp. 83 sqq.

[6] Australia. *Report of the Royal Commission on the Navigation Bill of the Australian Commonwealth*, 1904. See, in particular, pp. 60 sqq., R. E. Cunliffe's memorandum 'On the powers of colonial legislatures generally in relation to merchant shipping'.

time conference'[1] which began its sessions a few days before the Colonial Conference met. It failed to reach a settlement and left England at grips with serious difficulties at two opposite extremities of her Empire. In Newfoundland the United States refused to recognize certain provisions of the local mercantile code, and the Foreign Office, siding as always with the United States against British colonists, ordered the cruisers stationed in those waters to protect American vessels against agents of the Newfoundland Government if the latter attempted to enforce its legislation on the Americans.[2] And Australia actually introduced a Bill during the following summer which not only excluded from the coasting trade all non-Australian vessels, including British, but interpreted coasting trade so widely that it seemed as though the deliberate object of the measure were to aim a deadly blow at British merchant shipping.[3] Should the British Government, to maintain the imperial order, quarrel with the United States and Australia? British diplomacy, both within and without the Empire, once

[1] Colonial Merchant Shipping Conference, 1907. *Report of a Conference between Representatives of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth of Australia and New Zealand on the subject of Merchant Shipping Legislation*, 1907—It is worth remark that the issue raised by this dispute between the mother country and her dominions was quite different from the issue between England and foreign powers on this same question of merchant shipping. As Sir Joseph Ward pointed out (*Colonial Merchant Shipping Conference, 1907, Report* p. 2) the mercantile legislation of New Zealand was in advance of the British and could not therefore be abandoned under pressure from the mother country. On the same page Lloyd George himself pays tribute to this legislation and remarks on the borrowings from it in the British Statute of 1906: 'This country is old and moves much more slowly than her younger and sprightlier children across the seas and reforms proceed with much slower pace here than they do in all colonies. I dare say many of us regret that, and look with longing eyes to the legislation which you have been able to achieve in the Colonies without much difficulty.'

[2] For this episode see the extremely indignant speech of the Newfoundland Premier, Sir Robert Bond, West India Club, June 5, 1907. At the conference the matter was discussed with such acerbity that the speeches were omitted from the official report. The dispute between the British and American Governments respecting the Newfoundland fisheries was finally submitted to the court of arbitration at The Hague, whose decision was on the whole favourable to the British thesis (*Annual Register*, 1910, pp. 458–9).

[3] The Australian Merchant Shipping Bill formed part of an entire programme, semi-protectionist and semi-socialist, adopted by Deakin's Liberal Cabinet which depended on a Liberal-Labour coalition. Of this programme our Bill was an item. To the Australian ship-owners it offered the monopoly of the coasting trade in Australian waters, to the exclusion in particular of British vessels coming from India and manned by Lascars; to the crews of merchantmen it offered extremely advantageous conditions of employment which would cost the owners dear. The programme also comprised what was termed the New-Protection: protective duties were imposed but the manufacturer who profited by them was obliged to raise his employees' wages in proportion. On this last point the High Court decided that the measure was unconstitutional as exceeding the powers of the Federal Parliament. The decision led to the fall of the Liberal Government and in the political confusion of the following months the Merchant Shipping Bill was lost sight of (*Economist*, October 13, 1907, May 23, June 13, 1908; *The Times*, October 30, 1908; *Economist*, December 5, 1908).

more employed its favourite methods, discussion, compromise, delay.

7

On the fundamental issue of preferential tariffs the offers came from the Colonies, the opposition from the mother country. But the former were not unanimous, and even those which offered Britain a preference became suddenly hostile to any kind of preferential treatment where the regulation of merchant shipping was concerned. As regards the military organization of the Empire the proposals for unification came from London, and Campbell-Bannerman left the matter to his imperialist Secretary for War, Haldane. The opposition came from the Colonies, who were opposed both to a supreme imperial command and the permanent representation of the Colonies on the Committee of Imperial Defence. They were content to request that the Colonies might avail themselves of the Committee's expert advice on questions affecting their local interests and in such cases send a representative to participate in its discussions. As regards the political organization of the Empire the late Unionist Colonial Secretary, Lyttelton, had submitted to the Colonial Governments a proposal that the 'Colonial Conference' should be transformed into 'an Imperial Council', on which their representatives would have permanent seats.[1] The suggestion attracted the Australian Premier, Deakin, but he was faced by the opposition not only of the new Liberal Government but of the Canadian Prime Minister, Sir Wilfred Laurier. It was finally decided to retain the 'Conference'. In future, however, it should be termed 'Imperial' instead of 'Colonial'; the Prime Minister, not the Colonial Secretary, should be its President; and it should meet regularly every four years, though, if necessary, special Conferences might be summoned in the interval. In default of a council Deakin proposed a 'permanent secretariat' of which the Prime Minister should be President. His proposal was defeated, but a secretariat for the Self-Governing Colonies was formed, at the head of which the Colonial Secretary was placed. All these measures could be interpreted in two senses. They might be regarded as steps towards a federation of the

[1] Colonial Conference. *Correspondence relating to the future organization of Colonial Conferences*, pp. 3–4.

Empire. But they might equally well be regarded as tending by the constitution of the new secretariat to detach from the rest of the Empire the Self-Governing Colonies, the Dominions, or Self-Governing Dominions as they were officially entitled for the first time in 1907.[1] And the fact that the president of future Conferences would be the Premier might be taken to imply that they were nothing more than conversations between the Prime Ministers of nations completely independent of each other. If the Dominions chose to draw the federal bond tighter, so much the better. If they decided to loosen it, the parting could be effected on friendly terms. In 1907, breaking for the first time with the

[1] The Colonies were first mentioned in the official title of the sovereign in the royal proclamation issued in 1858 annulling the Charter of the East India Company in the name of the 'Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Canada, South Africa, Australia and all the Colonies.' When, however, in 1876 Disraeli obtained from Parliament for the Queen the new title of 'Empress of India', opposition speakers (Gladstone amongst them) urged in vain that mention should be made of the Colonies. Disraeli rejected the proposal as implying that the Colonies did not form an integral part of the United Kingdom.—The word 'Dominion' was used for the first time in 1867 when the British Government decided to give it to the new federation of the British Colonies of North America. Lord Carnarvon explained that the title was adopted because of the sentiments of patriotic loyalty to the Crown which it implied, 'a designation which is a graceful tribute on the part of the colonists to the monarchical principle under which they have lived and prospered and which they trust to transmit unimpaired to their children' (H. of L., February 19, 1867; *Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. clxxxv, pp. 567–8). When it was decided in 1901 to introduce into the style of the new sovereign Edward VII a mention of the British Colonies Chamberlain originally proposed to add to the words 'King of Great Britain and Ireland' the words 'and of Greater Britain beyond the Seas'. The Canadian Government rejected the suggested formula and proposed 'King (or Sovereign) of Canada, Australasia, South Africa, and of all the British Dominions beyond the seas', or alternatively not to give offence to the Colonies not specifically mentioned the shorter form 'of all the British Dominions about the seas'. The latter formula secured the approbation of Natal, the Cape, Newfoundland, and New Zealand, and Chamberlain accepted it (*Colonies—Correspondence related to the proposed Alteration of the Royal Style and Titles of the Crown*, 1901). It was finally adopted by Parliament without opposition in the House of Commons, after a variation proposed by Lord Rosebery 'of all the Britains beyond the seas' had been rejected (H. of L., July 26, 1901; *Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., vol. xcviii, p. 188); see also H. of C., August 12, 1901; *Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., vol. xcix, pp. 457 sqq. The plural term 'Dominions' now designated all the Colonies, the Crown Colonies as well as the Self-Governing. When the text of the resolution defining the future composition of the Conference was laid before the Conference of 1907 the Prime Minister of New Zealand protested against the term 'Self-Governing Colonies' which it contained and proposed the title 'States of the Empire'. The phrase, however, was unintelligible in Australia, where the 'States' were the provinces of the Commonwealth. The term 'Dominions' was adopted, and in the text finally approved by the Conference they were termed 'Self-Governing Dominions' to distinguish them from the 'Crown Colonies' included among the Dominions in the royal title (Colonial Conference, 1907. *Published Proceedings and Principles of the Colonial Conference, 15th to the 26th April*, 1907, p. 16—*Minutes of the Proceedings of the*—pp. 79 sqq.). Strictly speaking, only Canada was a *Dominion*. Australia was a *Commonwealth*. The South African Colonies were not united. New Zealand was only a Colony but immediately after the Conference successfully claimed the title 'Dominion' (speech from the Throne, Wellington, June 21, 1907), and in September the entire country triumphantly celebrated Dominion Day.

established tradition, the Foreign Office permitted negotiations between Canada and France for a commercial treaty to be conducted at Paris, not by the British Ambassador, but the Canadian Premier, whose decisions were simply registered by a representative of the Foreign Office.[1] The solution of the question in whatever direction it might lie was left to the future. For the moment they discussed, compromised, postponed.

8

In this way, by adopting an attitude which combined generosity with caution, the Liberal Cabinet managed to emerge from the Conference with prestige unimpaired. But the problem of the relations to be established between the mother country and the Dominions was perhaps the least of those with which British imperialism was faced. Far more serious were those raised by the direct government of the different parts of the Empire. And nowhere were they more complicated than in South Africa, which had just played such a prominent part in English history. It was a compendium in which all the difficulties of imperial politics were summed up.

British South Africa contained between five and six million inhabitants, four or five million of whom were black—five or six black men for every white.[2] Among the blacks the Hottentots,

[1] For the change of attitude in this respect between the Liberal Cabinet of 1895 and the Liberal Cabinet of 1907 see *Colonies (Negotiations of Treaties with Foreign Powers) Return to an address of the Honourable House of Commons, dated 13 April, 1910; for 'Return of the Correspondence between His Majesty's Governments of the self-governing Dominions and Colonies respecting the constitutional position of the latter in the negotiation of commercial and other Treaties with Foreign Powers, including the letter from His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs dated Foreign Office London, 4th July, 1907, addressed to the British Ambassador at Paris and laid upon the Table of the Canadian House of Commons, 1910.'*

[2] According to Colonel Seely's calculation there were in South Africa 'between four and five million natives' (H. of C., August 16, 1909. *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1909, 5th Series, vol. ix, p. 953). Keir Hardie, in the course of the same debate, estimated the proportion of natives to whites as six to one (ibid., p. 988). These estimates can be no more than approximate. According to the census of 1904 there were 1,825,172 coloured persons to 580,380 whites in Cape Colony: 945,498 natives and 23,891 other persons of colour to 299,327 whites in the Transvaal; 84,541 natives and 55 other persons of colour to 898 whites in Swaziland; 241,626 coloured persons to 43,419 whites in the Orange River Colony; 79,978 natives in the employment of whites, and 6,686 'half-castes or others' to 97,189 whites in Natal in addition to 100,918 Indians counted separately. In Southern Rhodesia only the whites were included in the census. The reader can judge how difficult, in view of the diversity of methods employed, it is to determine more accurately than I have done the numerical proportion of the black population to the white. And these figures take no account of the great protectorates composed practically speaking wholly

whose culture was of a lower order, were declining in numbers and being swamped by the invasion of the Kaffirs from the north, a race morally and physically superior. The problem was further complicated by a host of mulattos, the coloured people, who regarded themselves as closer to the whites than their native ancestors. Originally, all the blacks had lived, and the majority still lived, under the tribal system. The individual was without rights, the chief of the tribe absolute master of persons and property, custom an even more despotic ruler, imposing its supreme command on the chief and his subjects alike. The men fought and spent the rest of their time in idleness, the women provided for their wants by cultivating the soil. But this indigenous system was now subject to the solvent action of new social forces. The liberal legislation of western Europe had given the blacks in the old Cape Colony equal civil rights with the white men. If they could prove that they possessed the requisite property qualification they were entitled to vote on the same footing as British or Dutch whites. And the Government furnished their children with a generous supply of schools. Where the old tribes survived steps had been taken to facilitate the transition from collective to private property. Elsewhere, the whites had pursued a different policy, protecting the tribal system against the corrosive forces to which it was exposed, segregating the blacks and refusing them access to European civilization. This method itself could be applied in different ways. In Natal, for instance, racial equality was proclaimed by the constitution, but the officials entrusted with its execution took care to render the principle nugatory. In the former Boer republics of the Orange River and the Transvaal the law sanctioned the subjection of the blacks. In the protectorates of Bechuanaland, Swaziland, and Basutoland, on the contrary, the sole object of an administration at once despotic and paternal was to maintain the tribal system intact and safeguard it against every encroachment of civilization. Almost everywhere, however, the new forces were tending to 'individualize' the blacks. Mass production, and such were the methods now used in

of blacks. In the Christian Commonwealth of February 22, 1906, we find the following statistics for Natal whose source is not given: Whites 82,542; blacks 877,388. Arnold-Forster (H. of C., March 29, 1906; *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cliv, p. 1650) also estimates the whites at 82,000, the blacks however at 956,000. For the native question in South Africa there is an important official document of this date: *South Africa: Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission 1903–5*, 1905; *Natal: Report of the Native Affairs Commission 1906–7*, 1908.

gold mining, brought it well within this category—withdrew the black man for a time from his kraal to return him to it with money of his own, eager to acquire land and assert his independence. These conditions gave birth to a revolutionary agitation and the 'Ethiopian' movement, which for the first time in Africa organized blacks—the native Christians—against the whites with a programme of national claims.

On the very morrow of the General Election of 1906 a serious native revolt broke out in Natal. The blacks refused to pay a poll tax imposed by the local Parliament. But it was stated that the 'Ethiopian' propaganda played a part in the insurrection. It was repressed by the provincial Government without assistance from the imperial army. A small local force of 5,000 put it down in a campaign which continued from February until July and cost the natives 3,000 lives. The summary condemnation to death of twelve rebels as a preliminary to the suppression of the revolt outraged humanitarian sentiment in England and faced the Cabinet with a problem which on many occasions already during the past century had embarrassed British Liberals. Was the independence of the Colony, in other words of the colonists, to be scrupulously respected? Or were they to protect the freedom of the natives even against the colonists? At first the Government decided in favour of the second course and ordered the execution of the condemned men to be postponed until the Colonial Office had established the justice and legality of their sentence. But it was now the turn of colonial public opinion to rise in revolt. Protests poured in from the Cape, from Australia, and from New Zealand. The Government of Natal resigned. Then the British Government yielded and sanctioned the executions.

In point of time this was the first outstanding episode in the colonial policy of the new ministry. It was humiliating, and the Unionist opposition at Westminster raised paeans of triumph. But it was in fact important only inasmuch as it called attention, perhaps for the first time, to the gravity of the problem of the black races in South Africa. For the moment it was another racial question which clamoured urgently for solution. For the blacks were not the only 'lower race' whose presence in South Africa made difficulties for the British Government. During the last few centuries the white peoples have systematically manipulated and transported, as it served their interests, a large variety of races.

They have called into being a negro America whose slave labour was a fertile source of wealth but whose emancipation has raised grave problems for which the United States has found no other solution than the paradoxical return to a system which in some of its moral aspects resembles the Indian caste system. In South Africa, as though to continue this circulation of races around the globe, the Anglo-Saxons invited an invasion of Asiatics in constantly increasing numbers. We have already spoken of the problem created by the importation of Chinese labour into the Rand gold mines and the important place it occupied in the mind of the British public on the eve of the General Election. The invasion of coolies aroused the hostility of the workers in the Transvaal, who objected to the competition of this cheap Asiatic labour. And the British workers sympathized with their grievance. On the Rand round Johannesburg a group had been formed which entitled itself the Labour party, the first item on whose programme was the expulsion of the Chinese. The Chinese labour also gave offence to many Boer peasants instinctively hostile to strangers and who, moreover, had good reason to be alarmed for the security of their property and persons. For these workers from the East were too often the refuse of Chinese crime whom the Government had cleared from its gaols. Too frequently they escaped from the compounds where they were segregated, plundered farms, and murdered isolated Boers. The British humanitarians made common cause with these two classes of objector. 'It is a state of affairs tainted with slavery,' Campbell-Bannerman declared in one of his election speeches, and he had barely become Prime Minister, indeed his Government had not yet received the ratification of the popular vote, when he announced that he had given instructions 'to stop forthwith the recruitment and embarcation of coolies in China and their importation into South Africa'.[1]

But at the very moment when he gave this pledge he found himself faced with the fact that in November 'licences' had been granted for the importation into the Transvaal of more than fifteen thousand Chinese. How could they be cancelled retrospectively? The lawyers pronounced unanimously that it was impossible. The Liberal ministers were therefore compelled on first taking office to assist passively at a new invasion of yellow

[1] Speech at the Albert Hall, December 21, 1905.

labour, and make a public declaration that the settlement of the question would be postponed until the Transvaal had been provided with a responsible government. It was a humiliating admission of impotence at a moment when the Election campaign was in full swing, and when the employment of Chinese labourers in the mines was the topic with which radical speakers found it easiest to excite the indignation of the masses against the Tory candidate. Nevertheless, for a whole year the British Government could do nothing more than co-operate in repatriating individuals with a number of capitalists who had adopted an independent line of action and make preparations to replace Chinese labour eventually by a combination of white and black labour locally recruited. Then, in the spring of 1907, in the lobbies of the Imperial Conference the enemies of yellow labour at last won the day. General Botha, the Prime Minister of the Transvaal, was struggling with pecuniary difficulties which placed his Government at the mercy of the Rand magnates. He secured from the British Cabinet the guarantee of a Transvaal loan of £5,000,000. He was therefore free to gratify the wishes both of the Boer peasants and the mining proletariat by ordering the repatriation when their contracts expired of the Chinese workers actually employed. The question was thus settled without involving the mines in the catastrophe predicted by Lord Milner's friends and the Rand capitalists.

It must be added that the Chinese were not the only Asiatics whose presence in South Africa gave anxiety to the local and the imperial governments. The Hindus had traded along the entire east coast of Africa long before the first Europeans made their appearance. At present they were established in large numbers not only in Natal, where the annual number of Hindu immigrants was estimated to exceed that of the British, but even in the interior of the continent at Johannesburg, where they made a living as petty traders and artisans. The whites, however, took alarm and began to pass legislation subjecting the Asiatics to a special code, as though they were an inferior 'caste'. The Hindus replied by revolt. Mohandas Karamchad Gandhi, a devout Hindu ascetic, who, however, had studied law in London and practised at the South African bar, where he defended his compatriots' interests in the courts, had begun his formidable career as an agitator.[1] He

[1] V. D. V. Athalye, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, 1923.

revolted first when he saw his fellow countrymen deprived of the suffrage and subjected to special legislation condemning them to a life of semi-slavery. For a time he enjoyed the support of the High Commissioner, Lord Milner. For the Transvaal was at this time the scene of his activities, and Milner welcomed a further pretext to oppose the aged Kruger. Gandhi had therefore throughout the Boer War displayed the most ardent loyalty to the British cause, hoping presumably to win for the Hindus the favour of Great Britain after the victory. But, if such had been his hope, he was speedily undeceived. The Hindus in South Africa were exposed to an ostracism increasingly severe and new legal restrictions were imposed upon them. In 1906 Gandhi inaugurated a novel method of resistance, not active insurrection but passive resistance, silent and inactive refusal to obey any of the regulations laid down by the law.[1]

9

The Hindu agitation in South Africa was destined five or six years later to assume formidable proportions. And it would prove the prelude to an even more serious agitation in British India, for which reason it deserved mention. For the moment, however, one question in South Africa dominated all the rest—another racial problem. How were the English and the Boers to be reconciled a few years after the war which had raged between them? In conformity with the promises embodied in the treaty of Vereeniging the Government had already begun in 1905 to bestow on the Transvaal a measure of political liberty. A preliminary constitution had been granted by letters patent of March 31, two days before the departure of Lord Milner, who had resigned on March 2, Lord Selborne leaving the Admiralty to take his place. How are we to explain the change at this particular moment? Can we avoid the conclusion that Milner, while proclaiming the grant of a constitution to which, moreover, we are told, he gave a 'general assent', did not altogether approve it in detail and preferred to leave to a successor the difficulties its introduction would involve?[2]

[1] Conflicts between Anglo-Saxons and Indians were not confined to the African coast of the Indian Ocean. In Canada in 1907 anti-Japanese riots were complicated by anti-Indian disturbances. For the Vancouver disturbances see *The Times*, September 12, 13, 14, 1907.

[2] Notice the ill-humour with which Milner announced the reform of April 5, 1901, while admitting it to be inevitable, in his speeches at Germiston, March 15, 1905, and

One thing at least is certain: his resignation was a godsend to the Liberal Government, which thus escaped the necessity of dismissing a few months later an orthodox disciple of Chamberlain. Lord Selborne was no doubt a very conservative statesman, but a man of moderate temper with whom Campbell-Bannerman could get on well. In the December of 1905 the need to take a further step in the Transvaal was urgent. For the constitution of 1905 had completely failed to satisfy the Boer population. A legislative council of forty members, of whom the majority were elected: this at first sight seemed a considerable concession. But the franchise was based on a property qualification determined in such a way as to give the vote to a far larger number in the towns than in the country districts, to the benefit of the British element and the detriment of the Boer. Moreover, the powers of this council were limited. The British Government had the right to 'disavow' within two years any law it might pass, and the initiation of financial measures was strictly reserved to the governor.[1] A formidable agitation against the measure was organized by General Botha. He announced that he and his friends would enter the legislative council only to make any regular work impossible by their obstruction. He demanded—not only for the Transvaal but also for the Orange River Colony—the immediate establishment of a system of unrestricted democratic self-government with a responsible cabinet. The Liberals had barely entered office when they decided that the constitution of 1905 should not be put into operation and despatched a Commission to South Africa to conduct a rapid inquiry and report before the summer. By July 31 the Government was able to lay before both Houses the main lines of the constitution, definitely granted to the Transvaal by letters patent of December 6.[2]

The suffrage was for all practical purposes universal. The constituencies were arranged in such a way that no one could claim that old traditions were outraged, for the former boundaries were

Johannesburg, March 31, 1905 (*Transvaal, Further Correspondence relating to affairs in Transvaal and Orange River Colony . . .* 1905, pp. 188 sqq.). See, however, W. Basil Worsfold, *The Reconstruction of the New Colonies under Lord Milner*, 1913, vol. ii, pp. 259 sqq., who maintains that the entire text of the constitution had Lord Milner's approval. If this is the case it was the mere fact of granting representative government to the Transvaal which aroused his antipathy.

[1] *Transvaal. Despatch transmitting letters patent and order in council providing for constitutional changes in the Transvaal.* April 1905.

[2] *Transvaal. Transvaal Constitution*, 1906. *Letters patent and instructions relating to the Transvaal and Swaziland Orders in Council.* December 1906.

respected. And though the English would possess a slight majority in the new assembly it was only because they possessed it in the population. In the debates the two languages were to be on an absolutely equal footing, whereas under the provisions of the constitution of 1905 Dutch would merely have been tolerated. A second chamber nominated by the Executive was reluctantly set up and the Government was at pains to defend it. It was indeed an arrangement 'of which nobody is particularly enamoured'. But all the Colonies possessed such a chamber, and this second chamber, avowedly moreover of a temporary nature, might serve as a useful check in the interest of the Kaffirs on the native policy of the popular assembly. The two speeches in which on the same day Lord Elgin in the Lords, Churchill in the Commons,[1] explained the intentions of the Cabinet, met with violent protests from the opposition. But the Unionist Press was more reserved and when in December the matter came once more before Parliament the protest of the opposition in both Houses seems to have been merely formal.[2]

During this same December the Government promised to extend self-government to the Orange River Colony. The following June it carried out its pledge. It was an even bolder experiment, for in this case the population was homogeneous and completely Dutch. But in the Transvaal itself, to the great disappointment of the British Government, the Boers secured the majority of seats. This did not necessarily mean that the Boers were the majority of the population. But it proved to the hilt that the Pro-Boers had been right in condemning a war undertaken in the interest not of the British inhabitants but the mineowners. For an entire section of the British population, particularly among the working class, rejecting the 'progressive' party which entitled itself the English party and was manipulated by the mineowners, voted for the candidates of Het Volk, the Boer nationalist party. In this way it came about that 'General' Botha, a general of the Boer army, represented his country at the meetings of the Imperial Conference. He received from the Secretary for War the honours British courtesy owed to the valour with which he had fought England on the battlefield.

[1] July 31, 1906 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxii, pp. 611 sqq., 729 sqq.).
[2] H. of L., December 17, 1906 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxvii, pp. 939 sqq.); H. of C., December 17, 1906 (ibid., pp. 1063 sqq.).

10

The great problem remained to be solved—the union of all these free states into a single state. From the economic standpoint it was intolerable that customs and railroad charges should form a perpetual source of conflicts between them, suspended from time to time by laborious and precarious agreements. From the political standpoint it was absurd that a white man should acquire or lose the right to vote by changing his domicile from one state to another, or black men be subject to a different system. Circumstances were particularly favourable for settling the problem. The imperialists of Milner's school favoured a federation of South Africa, as the first stage to the federation of the entire Empire. It was to make it possible that they had engineered the forcible destruction of the two independent republics. It was in fact the group of Lord Milner's former subordinates in South Africa, headed by the youthful Lionel Curtis, who undertook a serious examination of the question and drew up the important memorandum communicated by Lord Selborne to the home Government in January 1907.[1] The British Liberals on their part wished to prove that their methods, not those employed by Chamberlain and his disciples, provided the true solution of imperial problems and that, by granting a system of complete political independence to the Transvaal and Orange River, they were taking the quickest road to reconcile the two races throughout the whole of South Africa. If Milner had not left Africa, if there had been no General Election in 1906, would Lionel Curtis and his friends have carried out their task with the same freedom? And the Boers expected the unification of South Africa to compensate them for the treaty of Vereeniging by establishing their predominance by peaceful and legal means throughout the entire country. For the Orange River Colony was wholly theirs, in the Transvaal they disposed of the majority of seats, and if Dr. Jameson, the hero of the raid, was Prime Minister at Cape Town, it was an accident due to the disenfranchisement of so many rebels. The amnesty had supervened, once more they would be masters, an expectation actually verified in 1908.

[1] *The Selborne Memorandum: A review of the Mutual Relations of the British South African Colonies in 1907.* With an Introduction by Basil Williams, 1925.

The task of framing the constitution of the future British South Africa was entrusted to a national convention of representatives of the various South African Governments which sat from October 1908 to February 1909, and whose labours resulted in the Statute by which the Imperial Parliament granted the constitution of September 1909.[1] No general solution of the native problem could be found and for that reason the different systems of franchise obtaining in the various states, henceforth 'provinces' of the Union, were left intact. Where the blacks already possessed the franchise (as in Cape Colony) they continued to possess it for the elections to the new federal Parliament, and the constitution even laid it down that they could be deprived of it only by a majority of two-thirds. But they were ineligible for membership of the Union Parliament, and the utmost the home Government could wring from the Boer representatives was the nomination by the Governor-General of a limited number of senators on the ground of their special knowledge of the 'needs' and 'wishes' of the coloured people, an extraordinarily indirect form of representation. All the economic difficulties on the other hand were overcome by a political unity so complete that it exceeded Milner's federal ideal and eventually enabled the Boers to override all opposition by English Natal.[2] The capital was the Cape; the Supreme Court sat at Bloemfontein and the executive departments were established at Pretoria in the Transvaal. The Statute was passed without amendment in an almost empty house,[3] at a moment indeed when the attention alike of the nation and of Parliament was absorbed by questions nearer home and exciting

[1] 9 Edw. 7, Cap. 9: An Act to consolidate the Union of South Africa (*South Africa Act*, 1909)—For the Union of South Africa and the work of preparation see R. H. Brand. *The Union of South Africa 1909*—also an excellent chapter in Sir John A. R. Marriott, *The Mechanism of the Modern State: A Treatise of the Science and Art of Government*, 1927, vol. i, pp. 257 sqq.

[2] Lord de Villiers, president of the National Convention, visited Canada in 1908 and found that too much autonomy had been left to the provinces. 'In Quebec', he wrote, 'the result has been to establish a distinctly French province without any prospect of its being ever merged into a Canadian as distinguished from a purely French nation' (Eric A. Walker, *Lord Villiers and his Time: South Africa, 1842–1914*, 1925, p. 434). At first sight it may seem strange to find a Boer so unsympathetic to the successful efforts of the French Canadians to preserve their independence. The reason is that he was thinking of the similar efforts the English in Natal might make to retain their independence against the Dutch majority. It was a curious fact that in both instances the British Government adopted the constitutional arrangement (federation in Canada, unification in South Africa) most unfavourable to the British element.

[3] H. of C., August 16, 1909, Arthur Balfour's speech: 'The House is a thin one and a weary one' (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1909, 5th Series, vol. ix, p. 1000).

political passions more directly. Nevertheless, this easy acceptance of the South African constitution eighteen months after Campbell-Bannerman's death was a triumph for that Gladstonian liberalism of which he had been the convinced exponent.

II

In Northern Africa, Egypt[1] from the juridical standpoint formed no part of the Empire, and Egyptian affairs, therefore, came within the competence not of the Colonial but the Foreign Secretary. For Egypt was simply 'occupied' by a British army and the British Consul-General at Cairo possessed only the influence the presence of the army of occupation conferred upon him. This, however, was very great and the Consul-General was, in fact, the Imperial Governor of the country. A legislative council which met every month and of whose thirty members only fourteen were nominated by the Government, the remainder elected at second-hand on the basis of a franchise practically universal, had the right to criticize but not to reject or amend the bills submitted to it by a cabinet entirely subject to British influence. A General Assembly, composed, in addition to the thirty councillors and six ministers, of forty-six elected 'notables' of whom eleven represented the towns, thirty-five the country districts, had the right to refuse its assent to any new tax. But the Khedive's government, subject for twenty years to Lord Cromer's beneficent supremacy, had never found itself obliged to ask the assembly for new sources of revenue. The Budget always showed a surplus, and the country enjoyed a prosperity unknown until the arrival of the English. The Soudan was completely pacified, and by the agreement of April 1904 France had finally recognized England's privileged position in Egypt. When, therefore, the Liberals took office at the end of 1905 they had no reason to expect trouble from this quarter. A keen supporter of the Anglo-French agreement, Lord Cromer was certainly convinced at this period that, free at last from the con-

[1] For the condition of Egypt under British control see Lord Cromer's excellent annual reports. *Egypt: Reports by His Majesty's Agent and Consul General on the finances, administration and condition of Egypt and the Soudan in . . .* See also, for the period immediately preceding that with which we are dealing, Alfred Milner (Lord Milner), *England in Egypt 1892 . . .* 11th Ed. *with additions summarizing the course of events to the year 1904*, 1904. See also The Earl of Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, 2 vols., 1908.

stant difficulties caused by the opposition of the French Colony with the more or less open support of the Quai d'Orsay, he could pursue without further obstacle the complete anglicization of Egypt. But suddenly a native agitation sprang into existence more embarrassing and possibly more dangerous than the French obstruction had been. In one aspect it was a nationalist movement. A powerful group belonging to the elite of the native population —doctors, men of business, barristers, journalists—argued that since the British Government claimed that the object of its occupation of Egypt was to bring that country the benefits of western civilization, it should not stop half-way but grant Egypt those parliamentary institutions of which the legislative assembly was a mere shadow but which, it would seem, constituted the pith and marrow of European civilization. In another aspect it was a panislamic movement, not confined to Egypt, but active along the entire northern coast of Africa. As such it appealed to the lower strata of the population, untouched by western influences. The panislamic agitators, their eyes fixed on the Sultan, preached a revolt of all Moslems against the oppression of the colonizing powers and their culture.

In the opening months of 1906 the relations between the Anglo-Egyptian Government and Turkey were disturbed by a serious diplomatic incident. It concerned the frontier between the Turkish and Egyptian territory in the region of Sinai. The Turkish Government sought to extend its jurisdiction to the east coast of the peninsula. The British Government not only contested this claim but maintained that the territory under its control extended to the Mediterranean coast, to a point east of El-Arish. France and Russia supported Britain at Constantinople. The admiral in command of the Mediterranean fleet informed the Porte that he had made all arrangements to land a force in the most important islands of the Archipelago. In Egypt, the army of occupation was reinforced. Finally, on May 14, the Sultan, faced with an ultimatum, submitted. It was a diplomatic and military incident belonging to the foreign relations of the United Kingdom rather than to the administration of the Empire. If it concerns us here, it is on account of its strange repercussion on the domestic situation in Egypt. Reading the contemporary British press we receive the impression that the British Government was defending the interests and rights of Egypt to the east of the Suez Canal. But in Cairo

and Alexandria the episode by no means appeared in that light. It was regarded as a reinforcement of British control over Egyptian foreign policy, a machination to embroil the Egyptian with the Turkish Moslems. In the Soudan an Arab rising had to be suppressed by bloodshed, and Lord Cromer recognized that the troops hastily summoned from Malta to Cairo would be better employed in keeping order on the spot than in making war on Turkey. They were exposed to the hostility of native mobs. On June 13 at Denshawai, near Tanta, in the Delta, five officers attempted to shoot pigeons without first obtaining permission from the inhabitants. Their imprudence provoked a riot in which one of them was mortally wounded.

Fifty-two arrests were made and after a summary trial twenty-one of the accused were condemned, four of them to death. The death sentences were immediately carried out. But would Lord Cromer be content with repressing the disorders by force? Aware of the increasing gravity of the insurrection against British rule, he must surely perceive that concessions were inevitable. He categorically refused to admit this: the utmost he was prepared to concede was that it was desirable, though difficult, to give the natives a larger share in the administration, and he appointed Zaglul Pasha Minister of Education. He also admitted in principle the possibility of convoking the provincial councils more frequently, and increasing the number of their members, possibly even to some very slight extent their jurisdiction. But he would take no step in the direction of transforming the legislative council into an Egyptian Parliament.[1] Such a Parliament would be unworkable. It would soon be superseded by a despotism of the oriental type which would destroy all the fruits of the twenty years of British administration and whose first victims would be the 'blue shirted fellahs'. Lord Cromer would not allow that he was himself a despot for he was subject to the control of the Foreign Office and the British Parliament, where Radical opinion was always on the alert to denounce abuses in the administration of the Colonies, and was liable to the censure of the Egyptian press, against which he refrained from invoking the protection of

[1] *Egypt No.* 3 (1907). *Despatch from the Earl of Cromer respecting proposals of the Egyptian General Assembly*, May 8, 1907. See, a year later, the scheme for reforming the provincial councils worked out by the new Consul-General, Sir Eldon Gorst, in conformity with his predecessor's suggestions (pp. 3, 4). Cf. Lord Cromer's reflections in 1908 in his *Modern Egypt*, vol. ii, pp. 275–6.

new laws.[1] In any case the grant of a constitution worthy of the name could not be contemplated until an indispensable preliminary reform had been effected—the abolition of the system of capitulations and mixed tribunals which enabled criminals to escape the clutches of the law if they could claim foreign nationality, and made a host of administrative acts dependent on the consent of seventeen governments. He suggested the establishment of a council composed exclusively of Europeans to draw up the laws governing the relations between natives and foreigners. He suggested at the same time a reform of the mixed tribunals. Their composition, while remaining international, would no longer be exempt from the control of the imperial government, and they would apply a code which the government with the assent of the legislative council could alter from time to time as local needs might require.[2] But this reform would itself be extremely difficult, requiring as it did the assent of seventeen states. In any case, it was not Lord Cromer's task to carry it through. At the opening of 1907 he resigned on grounds of health. Ten years earlier his departure would have been a triumph, in 1907 it appeared almost a flight. To be sure, his successor, Sir Eldon Gorst, the son of Sir John, declared his intention not to depart from the line of action followed by his predecessor. But did he believe what he said? Confronted with the problems of the new Egypt could he succeed where a greater than he had abandoned the field?

12

Keir Hardie, the leader of the Labour party, declared in July 1906 that 'the terrible event which happened in the Soudan the other day, with its attendant brutalities, reduced the administration of that country under British rule to the level of that of the Congo Free State', and he could not think of the massacre of the natives in South Africa 'without shame and horror'.[3] Were we to witness a revolt of British humanitarianism against the excesses of

[1] *Report . . . on the finances, administration and condition of Egypt . . . in 1905*, p. 12.

[2] The question had been already raised in the report for 1904. For the detailed plan of reform Lord Cromer had in view, see his report for 1906, pp. 10 sqq.

[3] Letter to a black domiciled in England: *Daily News*, July 5, 1906—Keir Hardie's reference to the Soudan betrays an obvious confusion in his mind between the repression of the Soudanese rebellion and the executions which followed the Denshawai incident.

British imperialism? What actually happened was the diversion of humanitarian indignation into another channel. It turned against the atrocities of a foreign imperialism, atrocities whose theatre was that state of the Congo to which Keir Hardie alluded. In 1884 at the Berlin Conference the great Powers having agreed to renounce for themselves the annexation of the Congo basin had decided to set up in those regions an independent State whose administration was entrusted to the King of the Belgians. He had governed the Congo as his private property with the greed of a very astute man of business. And he had delegated the administration of entire districts to companies who, to compel the natives to cultivate the rubber forests, had employed the most brutal methods, not even shrinking from massacre. British humanitarian sentiment was outraged and found vent in an outburst of indignation when in 1902 at the close of the Boer War liberalism once more prevailed over the imperialism popular during the preceding years.

The agent of an important Liverpool shipping company, Edmund Morel, resigned his post to devote himself entirely, with the financial support of the Liverpool mercantile magnates, to a campaign of propaganda against the abuses in the government of the Congo. He denounced as violations of freedom and humanity, violations also of the conditions laid down by the Berlin Conference, the exactions to which the natives were subjected and the closure of markets to European commerce by the monopolies granted to the companies.[1] He won the support of the political groups and the churches; in fact, British public opinion was solidly at his back. The King of the Belgians, against whom the campaign was primarily directed, decided to shelter himself by transferring the responsibility for the government of the Congo to the Belgian Parliament. Morel and his friends were willing that the British Government should approve the transfer, but only provided no reservations were made with the aim and effect of perpetuating all the abuses he denounced.[2] The struggle would

[1] E. D. Morel, *The Congo Slave State: A Protest against the new African Slavery; and an Appeal to the Public of Great Britain, of the United States, and of the continent of Europe*, 1903; *Red Rubber, The Story of the Rubber Slave Trade flourishing on the Congo in the year of grace 1906*, 1906; *Great Britain and the Congo: The Pillage of the Congo Basin*, 1909. For the author's biography see E. Seymour Cocks, *E. D. Morel: The Man and His Work*, 1920.

[2] E. D. Morel, *The Future of the Congo: An Analysis and Criticism of the Belgian Government's proposals for a reform of the condition of affairs in the Congo, submitted to His Majesty's Government on behalf of the Congo Reform Association; with Appendices.*

continue for several years. Success was at last in sight when at the end of 1909 Leopold's death raised to the throne of Belgium King Albert, more humane than his uncle and less of a man of business. But it was not until 1913 that the militant philanthropists of Liverpool obtained complete satisfaction on the two points in dispute: protection of the natives against the exploitation of which they were the victims; freedom of trade by the abolition of the monopolies.

This campaign of aggressive humanitarianism aroused little sympathy on the Continent. When the British Government called upon the other signatories of the Berlin convention to support its demands France and Germany refused. England found support only in Washington, the other capital of the English-speaking world.[1] In Paris and Berlin, as at Brussels, it was pointed out that Morel, far from being a martyr to the cause he espoused so zealously, lived by it and lived very well, and moreover that his financial backers were merchants, not apostles. Lord Cromer was loud in his denunciations of the disgraceful administration of the Congo. Was it to cover Denshawai? Or was it perhaps because he wished England to regain possession of the Lado enclave on the Upper Nile which she had too generously abandoned to the King of the Belgians? Lord Lansdowne on behalf of the Unionist party had called upon the British Government to intervene on the Congo between the negroes and the whites. Why had his attitude been so different when in Natal the white men were of British race? But when all this is granted, it remains true that the abuses denounced by the Congo Reform Association were hideous facts, that when Morel called upon the Belgian (and also the French) Government to abolish in their Colonies the privileges granted to private companies, he was only asking them to follow the example England had lately given in her own, and that England was not pursuing any secret design of conquest but simply claiming equal freedom of trade in the Belgian Congo for her own subjects and the entire world. Moreover, if his campaign directly served the interests of some exceedingly influential groups of business men, in other respects it ran counter to the policy pursued by Great Britain. At a moment when the Foreign Office in its fear of Germany was working hard to conciliate all

[1] Where E. D. Morel succeeded in securing Mark Twain's collaboration. *King Leopold's Soliloquy*; A Satire, 1907.

the European powers, his denunciations had aroused the indignation of the Belgian public against British hypocrisy and arrogance, and though Sir Edward Grey did his best to sweeten the pill by the courteous language in which he couched his Government's demands, he could not prevent Belgian foreign policy from remaining consistently pro-German until the eve of the Great War.

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But why at this particular moment did this problem of the government of the native races suddenly assume such importance at the two extremities of Africa? What was the underlying cause of the 'Ethiopianism' and the 'Panislamism' which in South and North Africa alike caused such embarrassment to British imperialism? We might be tempted at first sight to see in the phenomenon a reaction to the British General Election of January 1906. If British imperialism had begun to mistrust itself, what wonder if the subject peoples began to doubt the solidity of the edifice? But we cannot believe that the Election played such an important part in the history of our planet. We should rather, we think, regard this African agitation as the offshoot of a general insurrection of the non-European races against western domination. The movement had its centre in Asia, its origin in the victories won by Japan at an interval of ten years. Over China first; an Asiatic nation had proved itself capable of sharing in the partition of China on an equal footing with the Christian nations. Now over Russia: an Asiatic nation had successfully resisted a Christian empire whose power was then regarded as more formidable than that of any other and on Chinese soil had replaced by its own imperial sway the dominion of the European power it had defeated.

The lesson given by Japan to Asia had been further enforced by the Russian revolution. On the frontier between Europe and Asia the spectacle was witnessed of a mighty nation rising on the morrow of its defeat against a military and administrative despotism of venerable antiquity. For several months the overthrow of the Czardom was believed to be imminent. Why should not the Oriental nations follow the example set by the Russian revolutionaries and overthrow either, as in China, a corrupt monarchy which had proved incapable of defending its people against the

aggression of four or five foreign Powers, or, as in India, a foreign Government established by conquest? From 1899 to 1905 British India had been governed by a statesman who was one of the most typical representatives of the Imperialist spirit and creed. Already distinguished when appointed Viceroy of India for his expert knowledge of the problems of the Far East, Lord Curzon had displayed during his seven years' rule the qualities and the defects whose combination composed the perfect Chamberlainite: industry, obstinacy, ostentation, despotism, and an overbearing harshness. But in Lord Curzon the overbearingness passed all bounds and involved him in actions which, whether justifiable or not, arrayed everyone against him. He had hardly entered upon office when he claimed for himself, as Viceroy over three hundred million subjects, an independence comparable with that possessed by the freely elected Parliaments of the Dominions, and pursued in the north around and beyond the passes of the Himalayas a policy of aggression which caused no little anxiety to the home Government. He had antagonized the natives by taking steps to check the influx of candidates for the university examinations with the aim of retarding the growth of that intellectual proletariat whose temper alarmed the supporters of order in India. In 1905 he decided to divide Bengal into two separate parts, consolidating one of them with Assam. It was a measure for which excellent administrative arguments could be advanced. But its effect was to create a province of 'Eastern Bengal and Assam' in which two-thirds of the population were Mohammedans, thereby arousing what was nothing short of an insurrection among the Hindus. At least he might have won for his policy the support of the solid mass of 'Anglo-Indians'. But in the hope of conciliating the native population he had ordered that the ill usage to which they were subject at the hands of the conquering race should be punished as severely as the sporadic acts of violence committed by the natives against their masters. He had thus alienated the Anglo-Indians also. By a final caprice he quarrelled in 1905 with Lord Kitchener, who after signing the peace treaty in South Africa had secured the command of the Indian army. The original ground of quarrel was a dispute as to the respective authority of the Commander-in-Chief and the military member of the executive council, whom we may regard as the Viceroy's minister for war. Kitchener claimed complete independence in all purely military questions.

Lord Curzon refused to admit the claim and demanded a measure of control for his military member, in other words for himself. A commission of inquiry was appointed in London which pronounced in favour of Kitchener's contention, attributed only minor functions to the military member and called upon Lord Curzon to appoint a new official to fill a post in future subordinate. He proposed a candidate whose name appeared to spell defiance to the report of the Commission and who was not accepted. Lord Curzon thereupon resigned.[1]

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He was succeeded by Lord Minto, an old soldier who had been Governor-General of Canada. If he belonged to a family which like so many other great families had gone over to Unionism some twenty years ago, the family tradition of the Elliots was Whig, and, moreover, he had performed with tact in Canada duties identical with those of a constitutional sovereign. He might, therefore, be expected to bring to British India a period of calm after the seven troublous years inflicted upon the country by Lord Curzon.[2] Thus, when it took office, the Liberal Cabinet had been freed from Lord Curzon in Asia, as in Africa from Lord Milner. Even before the landslide of January 1906 the militant imperialism of 1898 was crumbling.

Half a century earlier British India had already experienced its revolution. Having suppressed it at the cost of much bloodshed, England had pledged herself to govern the country with a scrupulous impartiality, to respect native beliefs and customs and appoint 'so far as was possible' native subjects to administrative

[1] For Lord Curzon's viceroyalty see *The Life of Lord Curzon, being the authorized biography of George Nathaniel, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston*, by the Right Hon. the Earl of Ronaldshay, 1928, vol. ii, *Viceroy of India*; Lovat Fraser, *India under Curzon and after 1911*; see also the anonymous work extremely hostile to Lord Curzon's government entitled *Twenty-eight Years in India*. For the quarrel between Lord Curzon and Lord Kitchener see the *Life of Lord Kitchener* by Sir George Arthur, 1920, vol. ii, pp. 199 sqq.

[2] 'For the last few years—this is a very important point—the doctrine of administrative efficiency has been driven too hard. Our administration—so shrewd observers and very experienced observers assure me—would be a great deal more popular if it was a trifle less efficient, a trifle more elastic generally. We ought not to put mechanical efficiency at the head of our ideas. . . . Perfectly efficient administration, I need not tell the House, has a tendency to lead to over-centralization; it is inevitable. The tendency in India is to override local authority and to force administration to run in official grooves' (H. of C., June 6, 1907, John Morley's speech; *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxv, p. 881).

posts. She had kept her promise, though very slowly and very incompletely. Official regulations, whose terms, however, had often been altered, had reserved for the natives the monopoly of certain posts in the local government and had even admitted a proportion of them to more important positions. An Act of 1892, couched however in very ambiguous and indirect language, had empowered the Viceroy to introduce into the provincial councils a proportion of elected members.[1] These concessions had not been uninfluenced by an agitation whose mouthpiece was a body which met annually and entitled itself the Hindu 'National Congress'. Its adherents demanded for British India swaraj, Home Rule, a Hindu Parliament, freely elected and governing the three hundred million Indians by means of a responsible Cabinet. They did not declare war on British sovereignty or civilization. They simply claimed for the natives the right to collaborate on an equal footing with the civil servants of British birth in the westernization of India. They confined their agitation to strictly legal methods—public speeches and the press. They made little impression on the imperialists of the Chamberlain school, who were convinced at the close of the nineteenth century that the concessions already made were more than enough to satisfy the native races. 'My own belief', wrote Lord Curzon in 1900, 'is that the Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my great ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise.'[2] During the last year of his viceroyalty he would not have used the same language.

For the repercussion of the Japanese victories made itself felt and a new party of extremists soon came into being. Who were the leaders of this new movement? There was a certain Tilak, the author of learned works in which he sought to prove that the Vedic culture was the oldest and the most nordic of all cultures.[3] He began his career as an agitator by organizing a movement of protest against the law which had been passed prohibiting the marriage of Hindu girls before the age of twelve.[4] And his col-

[1] 55 & 56 Vict., Cap. 14: An Act to amend the Indian Councils Act, 1861 (*Indian Councils Act*, 1892).

[2] Lord Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, vol. ii, p. 152.

[3] *The Orion or researches into the antiquity of the Vedas*, 1893. *The Arctic Home of the Vedas being also a new Key to the interpretation of many Vedic texts and legends*, 1903.

[4] For Tilak and his political career see D. V. Athalye, *The Life of Lokamanya Tilak*, with a foreword by C. R. Das, president-elect of the Indian National Congress, 1922, and the collection of his political speeches, *Bal Gangadhar Tilak, His Writings and Speeches*, 1st edition by Ganesh & Co., Madras, no date. For the revolutionary agitation in general see Valentine

league was the Gandhi whose acquaintance we have already made. He came from South Africa, famous throughout India for his defence of his fellow Indians there against English persecution. He had brought with him the programme the agitation must follow. It was 'non-co-operation', swadeshi, the boycotting of everything English or European, institutions as well as goods. In itself this method did not involve the use of violence. But it was not long before the malcontents, not content with refusing to buy British goods, publicly burned them. And very soon they grew tired of these attacks on property, and assassinations by shooting or bomb took their place. The movement was a return to the national traditions, a revolt against western materialism and utilitarianism, a movement to preserve Brahmanism in its integrity.[1] It attached itself to the avowed anti-Mohammedan agitation to which the separation of the two Bengals had given birth. The leaders, however, perceived the danger to their cause which would be involved by a civil war between the Hindus and Moslems of which the British would reap the benefit, and sought for a banner that would unite both against the common oppressor. Moreover, both the Tolstoyan programme of passive non-co-operation and the dynamite outrages betrayed Russian influence. The difference between the movement by which Japan had successfully asserted her hegemony in the Far East against the supremacy of the European powers and this movement by which India was attempting to throw off the British yoke may be summed up as follows. In Japan a monarchy and an hereditary aristocracy of ancient and proud traditions borrowed from Europe her industrial and military methods the better to resist the invasion of her culture. In India an entire people, also the heir of an immemorial tradition, borrowed from the European nations, though we must admit from the least European of these, namely Russia, their methods of revolutionary agitation to achieve the same end.

Under these circumstances it was an act of courage for John Morley to accept, even perhaps to ask for, the post of Secretary of State for India. He regarded himself as the official representative

Chirol, *Indian Unrest: A Reprint, revised and enlarged from 'The Times', with an introduction by Sir Alfred Lyall*, 1910. For a general view of the social and political problems connected with the government of British India at this period see the excellent work by Joseph Chailley, *L'Inde Britannique; Société indigène; Politique indigène; Les idees directrices*, 1910.

[1] For the attempts made at this period in India to reinvigorate Brahmanism, see Dr. J. N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, 1915.

in the Cabinet of the Gladstonian tradition. Perhaps in playing this part he was a little too obviously conscious of his own importance. He was a great Liberal, a Liberal veteran, a survivor of the golden age of Liberalism, and as such his attitude towards the new tendencies of the younger generation was an indulgent pity not the less irritating for a tinge of disdain. Moreover, he was not very popular with his colleagues, beginning with Campbell-Bannerman, who had given him the amusing nickname Priscilla, suggestive of a spinster and a bluestocking. But it cannot be denied that he acquitted himself of the formidable task with firmness and prudence and as successfully as the circumstances permitted. He had the good fortune to deal with a Viceroy of modest personality and tractable temper, content in his relations with him to adopt the attitude of a subordinate rather than an autocrat.[1] He had also the good fortune to be faced in the House of Commons by a leader of the opposition who had nothing of Chamberlain's spirit. Balfour passed the word to his followers not to molest Morley, and his orders were obeyed without difficulty at a time when the right of the sword was no longer the fashionable creed in England.[2]

[1] For Morley's Indian policy see *Recollections by John Viscount Morley, Book V: A Short Page in Imperial History* (vol. ii, pp. 147 sqq.). The reader will find there copious extracts from his daily memoranda and his letters to Lord Minto. See also John Morley, *Speeches on Indian Affairs*, Second Edition revised and enlarged; and on the other hand John Buchan, *Lord Minto: A Memoir*, 1924. It is the life story of Lord Minto published by his family after his death. The author does his best to prove that Lord Morley's recollections place the facts in a false light. According to Buchan the real author of the policy which Morley would have us regard as his personal choice and imposed by him on Lord Minto was on the contrary Lord Minto who, by flattering Morley's senile vanity, contrived to make him believe that he was the originator when he was really obeying the Viceroy's dictation. In fact Lord Morley does not conceal so often as Buchan would have us believe the points on which he took Lord Minto's advice—for example, the appointment of a native member of the Viceroy's executive council. He even admits that in certain instances he was less bold than the Viceroy. The latter wanted a majority of non-official members in the Viceroy's legislative council. Morley opposed it. (H. of C., December 17, 1908; *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxcviii, pp. 1984–5.) On the other hand as regards the composition of the new executive councils and on the question of an amnesty, whatever Buchan may say, Minto was the conservative, Morley the reformer. And it remains doubtful whether Lord Minto's liberalism was the result of deep convictions or mere indolence. See for instance the account of him preserved by W. S. Blunt in his Diary for October 25, 1909: '. . . He also told us about Minto, as Viceroy of India, a mere nonentity in the Government, not even reading the most important documents laid before him. On one occasion they tested this by gumming the leaves slightly together, which he returned unopened' (*My Diaries*, vol. ii, p. 292). For a good summary of the reforms accomplished by Morley see E. Major, *Viscount Morley and Indian Reform*, 1910. Some interesting details may be found in Syed Sirdar Ali Khan, *The Life of Lord Morley . . .* 1923, pp. 194 sqq. For a general survey of British legislation affecting India consult Sir Courtenay Ilbert's compendium, *The Government of India: A brief historical survey of Parliamentary Legislation relating to India*, 1922.

[2] Morley's Diary, August 2, 1906: 'I will take care that Balfour and Percy are kept well informed of the truth of things. I don't think there is any predisposition in any quarter to

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Whatever hopes the formation of a Liberal ministry, when the Unionist Cabinet resigned in favour of Campbell-Bannerman and his colleagues, aroused in some quarters, whatever fears it aroused in others, were enhanced a few months after the General Election by the incidents of the Fuller affair. Certain schools in Eastern Bengal had taken part in the agitation of the extremists. The Lieutenant-Governor of the province, Sir J. Bampfylde Fuller, called upon the University of Calcutta to take disciplinary measures against them. Lord Minto disapproved of this demand and asked him to withdraw it. Rather than obey he offered his resignation. It was accepted and he was immediately replaced. The incident caused a great stir among the Anglo-Indians, which found an echo in London. But Morley made it plainly understood that his Indian policy would not be a mere exhibition of weakness. He systematically carried out a perfectly definite policy, on the whole the reverse of that which Lord Cromer had followed in Egypt. Lord Cromer had scrupulously respected the freedom of the press: Morley repressed its excesses. Lord Cromer had refused pointblank the nationalist demand for a representative Parliament at Cairo: Morley, on the contrary, answered the claims of the National Congress by a policy of concessions.

Yielding to Lord Minto's arguments and braving the wrath of the hundred and fifty Radicals who under the title of the Indian Committee constituted themselves the advocates at Westminster of the Hindu rebellion, Morley authorized the Governor-General to put into force regulations dating from the days of the East India Company, by which his agents were empowered to prosecute the authors of seditious articles; public meetings could be prohibited at his discretion in particular districts, and dangerous agitators even deported without trial. On May 10, 1907, a viceregal ordinance subjected public meetings in certain 'proclaimed' areas to a severe control. On June 3 the Viceroy gave full powers to the local authorities to prosecute seditious articles. But at the same time Morley informed Parliament and the nation that his

think ill of us.' May 3, 1907: 'Balfour is behaving well, as might have been expected. He told me that he had passed the word to his men that they are not to molest me. (*Recollections*, vol. ii, pp. 83, 213.)

determination to liberalize the political institutions of British India remained unshaken.[1] The Government intended to carry the elective and representative principle throughout the entire constitutional edifice of India. It also intended in fulfilment of the promises made in 1861 to give the natives access even to the highest ranks of the civil service. We may remark the conception, inspired by Burke rather than by Mill[2] and perhaps suggested to Morley by Lord Minto, of a species of consultative senate or council of notables (Imperial Advisory Council) in which the great landowners would sit side by side with the native princes. This arrangement would give its due weight 'to one of the great conservative forces which the bureaucratic structure of an alien government has to some extent inevitably tended to overshadow'.[3] To prepare the public mind for these impending reforms Morley took the further step of nominating two Indian members of the 'Council of India' which assisted him at Whitehall. He thus initiated the important measures which the British Parliament adopted during the following years in execution of a prearranged programme. On the one hand, there was a press law which authorized the police to suppress revolutionary organs and confiscate copies of the newspaper and its printing apparatus, an Act, based in fact on a statute passed in 1883 to repress the activities of Irish anarchists in England, inflicting severe penalties for the fabrication and even, if it gave grounds for 'reasonable suspicion' the mere possession of explosives, and a Statute withdrawing acts of anarchist violence from the ordinary procedure of the courts and trial by jury.[4] On the other hand, a solemn message was sent from the King-Emperor to the princes and people of India on the fiftieth anniversary of the date when the British Government took over the territories hitherto governed by the East India Company. It announced a very wide amnesty and at the same time a 'prudent' extension of the liberties granted to

[1] H. of C., June 6, 1907 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxv, pp. 883–4).

[2] See in the speech delivered by Morley at Arbroath, October 21, 1907, the extremely involved passage in which the aged Radical advises young Hindus to seek the inspiration of their liberalism in Burke rather than in Mill. In his speech of June 6, 1907 (ibid., p. 880) he appeals to Mill—whom he calls the teacher of his generation—only to support the legitimacy of Britain's paternal government in India.

[3] Parliamentary Papers, August 26, 1907 (*The Times*, August 27, 1907).

[4] The Act regulating the Press and the Act dealing with explosives June 8, 1908; for the detailed provisions of these two Statutes see *The Times*, July 9, 1908. Act subjecting anarchist plots to a special jurisdiction, December 11, 1908; for its provisions see *The Times*, December 11, 1908.

India by the Indian Councils Act of 1892. The new Indian Councils Act[1] passed in 1909 by the British Parliament without any very serious opposition[2] did not alter the strictly advisory character of the provincial legislative councils. Nor did it alter their distinctive system of representation—a representation not of individuals, but of interests effected in accordance with complicated rules laid down by the Viceroy. And in yet other respects the Bill was a less ambitious measure than the important measure of decentralization previously contemplated, less ambitious even than the measure announced in December 1908. Lord Morley declared with the utmost emphasis that the new Act must not be regarded as a step towards parliamentary government, that neither now nor at any later date would he take the responsibility of setting up a parliament in India.[3] But the membership of the legislative councils was considerably increased so that they bore a closer resemblance to parliaments. In future the election would be a genuine election, not the mere recommendation to the Viceroy of a candidate whom he was free to reject, and the competence of the councils, particularly in matters of finance, was guaranteed and extended.[4] And measures were taken to secure that on all the legislative councils except the Viceroy's the non-official members should always be in a majority.[5] Further, Morley, with Lord Minto's full support, appointed a native to the Viceroy's executive council,[6] and the new statute empowered the Viceroy to set up in conjunction with every organ of provincial government an executive council to which Indians would be eligible on the same terms as Europeans. It was not enough to satisfy the extremists:

[1] 9 Edw. 7, Cap. 4: An Act to amend the Indian Councils Acts 1861 and 1892 and the Government of India Act, 1833 (*Indian Councils Act*, 1909).

[2] For the Indian Councils Act of 1909 see H. of L., December 17, 1908. Lord Morley's speech (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxcviii, pp. 1,974 sqq.) and the parliamentary papers published at the same time; the report of the Royal Commission appointed in December 1908 which appeared in March 1909; also H. of C., April 19, 1909, T. F. Buchanan's speech (ibid., 5th Series, vol. iii, pp. 496 sqq., 1266 sqq.).

[3] H. of L., December 17, 1908 (ibid., 4th Series, vol. cxcviii, p. 1995).

[4] The second clause of the Act of 1892 granted the Viceroy's legislative council and the provincial legislative councils the right to discuss the Budget. But on this point it imposed restrictions abolished by Clause 5 (b) of the Statute of 1909.

[5] Critics remarked that the non-official members need not be natives and, therefore, that the Councils though not containing a majority of officials might contain nevertheless a majority of Europeans (Wilfred Blunt, *My Diaries*, November 22, 1909).

[6] The decision had been approved by the Cabinet on May 3, 1907. But it had taken two years to overcome the opposition of the King and a powerful section of the House of Lords who considered that the step would give offence to the native princes (Sir Sidney Lee, *King Edward VII*, vol. ii, p. 38).

they were still a long way from swaraj. Nevertheless, the British Government had good reason for satisfaction. It had conciliated the moderate element of the population and without taking any imprudent risk had given a more liberal character to the government of India.

Outbreaks of rebellion in Egypt; swadeshi in Bengal. Despite differences of creed and language these were two different forms, African and Asiatic, of an identical phenomenon, the revolt of nationalities against empires, two repercussions of the same important historical event, the victory won by Japan on land and sea, the breakdown of Russian imperialism in the Far East. We have found it necessary to emphasize the grave significance of these events, whose unexpected issue we shall witness in 1914, the world war. And it is the more necessary because they show what difficulties faced the new Liberal Cabinet from the outset. Tied by its Gladstonian traditions to an anti-imperialist policy, it was nevertheless responsible for the administration of the vast Colonial Empire it had inherited, the largest the world had ever known. Opposition speakers were in a position to exploit these difficulties against Campbell-Bannerman's ministry, offer embarrassing congratulations on the vigour with which it repressed revolutionary plots in Bengal, and force the Government to yield when it attempted to protect the Kaffirs in Natal from the violent methods of repression adopted by the local authorities. But these difficulties did not threaten the existence of the Government. At the end of two sessions its formidable majority had not been seriously impaired, and no one could claim that its method of governing the Empire had disappointed the expectations of the electorate. It had granted a system of complete self-government to the Boers of South Africa and had actively promoted political and administrative reform in India. Moreover, its predecessors had pursued too systematically the policy of diverting popular feeling to imperial questions. The British public was heartily weary of their policy of national honour and expensive victory, and this weariness which contributed so powerfully to the Liberal victory of January 1906 was no less evident two years later. There remained the problems of strictly domestic concern, whose importance was the greater since the country displayed less interest in colonial affairs. There was the Irish question, always a deep line of cleavage between the two parties. There was the religious and

educational question, once more acute since the Education Act of 1902. And finally, there was the labour question, also acute since the Courts and finally the House of Lords, sitting as the supreme court of appeal, had undermined the privileged position of the trade unions.

II DOMESTIC QUESTIONS: IRELAND, EDUCATION, LABOUR

I

We should hesitate to call the Irish question, in the strict sense, a domestic question concerning the mother country. No doubt, when the twentieth century opened England, Scotland, and Ireland were parts of a single 'United Kingdom'. But the Irish, or at least the vast majority of Irishmen, belonged to it in spite of themselves. At the very door of Great Britain, Ireland was still a 'Colony , and a Colony which demanded the independence a Conservative and 'Unionist' England refused. Twice we have seen the Unionist Cabinet attempt a policy of concession, and twice retreat when faced with the opposition of the Ulster 'colonists', who resented the grant of too much liberty to the 'natives' of the rest of the island. A change of Government supervened. Lord Aberdeen returned from Canada to replace Lord Dudley as Lord Lieutenant. Bryce, the eminent historian, and a recognized authority on the American Constitution, succeeded Walter Long as Chief Secretary. Sir Antony MacDonnell, the Under-Secretary, never vacated his post; he remained under Bryce as under Walter Long, under Walter Long as under Wyndham. What Irish policy would the new Cabinet adopt? They had pledged themselves 'to govern Ireland according to Irish ideas' and the Irish idea of government was first and foremost that Ireland should be governed by the Irish, the genuine Irish, the Irish Nationalists. Bryce yielded to their demands and appointed government officials and magistrates only on the recommendation of Redmond and his friends. Even so, he did not transform the administration rapidly enough to satisfy their impatience. He made them wait

over a year before he could be brought to sacrifice Sir Horace Plunkett, whom John Dillon pursued with implacable hate, regarding his policy of conciliation as more prejudicial to the claims of Irish nationalism than the brutal opposition of the old Tories. There remains the question of legislation in the strict sense. In the first place, what would be the effect of the important Statute of 1903 which, if carried into execution without a hitch, would transfer all the arable land from the landlords to the tenants?[1] From the very beginning it had encountered more or less avowed opponents among the Irish politicians, afraid lest they might be compelled to witness the success of a reform of which they had not been the authors, designed by those who had planned it to divert the Irish from the pursuit of their political claims by satisfying their economic. The confusion which followed its enactment, the arrest of the policy of devolution, the fall of the Unionist Cabinet, and the General Election favoured their opposition. They had no difficulty in finding in the country districts of Ireland a host of people whose discontent was easily inflamed.

The Act of 1903 contained clauses intended to prepare the way for the resettlement on the land of the tenants previously evicted by the landlords. But the funds provided were insufficient to enable them to be put into execution. An agitation was organized to secure the amendment of the Act of 1903 on this point, and the enactment of another statute. And the tenants of urban properties in their turn embarked on an agitation demanding the same safeguards against the threat of eviction as the rural tenants possessed.

The Act did not compel the sale of land and although it promised landlords who sold and tenants who purchased advantages which fully compensated for any loss they might sustain, there were landlords who nevertheless preferred the security of the *status quo* to the risks and vexations of a sale. The word of command went round to the tenants in many parts of Ireland to refuse in future to pay their landlords a rent in excess of the annuity paid to the State by the tenants who purchased their land. This would compel the landlords to sell, and the land purchase legally optional would become, if the order were universally obeyed, for all practical purposes compulsory.

[1] For the history of the Irish land laws, particularly during the period with which we are concerned, see W. F. Bailey, *The Irish Land Acts: A Short Sketch of their History and Development*, 1917. John E. Pomfret, *The Struggle for Land in Ireland, 1800–1923*, 1930.

The Act dealt only with arable land and did not extend to pasture. But in those western districts which the statute termed 'congested' there was no lack of space on which to settle the poverty-stricken crowd huddled in the villages. The cultivators had been evicted from their smallholdings, which had been absorbed in large estates, vast solitudes abandoned to herds of cattle. Did these unfortunates owe their dispossession solely to human wickedness? Was it not chiefly due to the operation of economic laws under the system of free trade common to England and Ireland? If these areas were no longer under cultivation, was it not because their cultivation was no longer profitable? If new cultivators were reinstalled, would they not be condemned to inevitable bankruptcy and the land soon return to pasture once more? Notwithstanding, public opinion clamoured for a resettlement and a plan of campaign was arranged to intimidate the graziers. Cattle were not mutilated: this cruel method adopted thirty years earlier had unnecessarily revolted humanitarian feeling in England. But at night the fences surrounding the pastures were removed and the animals driven off. The following morning the grazier could not find his beasts or, if he found them at all, it was only after a tiring search, several miles from their pasture, scattered along the roads. The cattle-driving first organized during the winter of 1906–7 steadily increased till the following autumn. The magistrates, unfortunate choices from the village politicians, either went on strike by refusing to sit on days when cases of cattle-driving would come before the bench or refused to condemn. The London press gave these disturbances all the publicity the agitators could desire and called upon the Government to take severe measures.

This was a policy which it was not easy for a Liberal Cabinet to adopt. The General Election was scarcely at an end when the operation of the Crimes Act of 1887 had been suspended in the districts, certainly very few, where it was still in force, and after a few months' opposition Bryce yielding to his colleagues' wishes[1] agreed to abandon the Arms Act of 1881, hitherto annually renewed, which enabled the Government to prevent anarchy by disarming seditious agitators. After he had exchanged at the end of 1906 the thankless task of governing Ireland for the more bril-

[1] Bryce to Lord Fitzmaurice, November 30, 1908 (H. A. L. Fisher, *James Bryce, Viscount Bryce of Dechmont*, vol. i, pp. 35 sqq.).

liant and easier post of Ambassador at Washington, the Cabinet found itself compelled to adopt repressive measures. But loyalty to Liberal principles forbade enforcement of the provisions of the last Crimes Act. The Cabinet could not forget that this statute, like all its predecessors of the same kind, had been passed by a Unionist Parliament in the teeth of Liberal protests. Steps were, moreover, taken to give the disaffected a measure of satisfaction. A Royal Commission was appointed, with Lord Dudley as chairman, to inquire into the laws dealing with the congested districts and discover what could be done to extend and improve them.[1] A Labourers Bill[2] and a Town Tenants Bill[3] were passed in 1906; an Evicted Tenants Bill[4] in 1907. Moreover, to better the conditions of the Irish lower classes within the limits of the existing legislation and secure valuations of the land more favourable to the tenants, the regulations governing the appointment of the Estates Commissioners were modified, so that to be appointed to the Board it would no longer be necessary to pass the prescribed examinations. And four of the commissioners were deprived of their posts to make room for men more agreeable to the Irish politician. But the agrarian legislation had given birth to a problem graver than those of which we have just spoken. The machinery of the statute of 1903 broke down.

[1] A Royal Commission appointed to inquire into and report upon, the operation of the Acts dealing with Congestion in Ireland, the working of the Congested Districts Board, and the Land Commission under these Acts, and the relations of the Board with the Land Commission and the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction; what areas (if any) outside the districts now scheduled as congested, require to be dealt with as congested; what lands are not conveniently situated for the relief of Congestion; what changes in law and administration are needed for dealing with the problem of Congestion as a whole, for facilitating the migration of the surplus population from congested areas to other lands and generally for the bettering the condition of the people inhabiting congested areas. Appointed July 2, 1906, it presented its report May 5, 1908.

[2] 6 Edw. 7, Cap. 37: An Act to amend the law relating to Labourers in Ireland and to make provision with respect to the application of a portion of the Ireland Development Grant (*Labourers* [*Ireland*] *Act*, 1906). The object of the Statute was to authorize the building of cottages at the public cost and make it easier for farm labourers to acquire pieces of land.

[3] 6 Edw. 7, Cap. 54: An Act to improve the position of Tenants of certain Houses, Shops or other Buildings in Ireland (*Town Tenants* [*Ireland*] *Act*, 1906). The object of the Statute was to give the tenant the right to be indemnified for any improvements of the property he had made during his lease, and also when the refusal to renew the lease was judicially declared 'unreasonable'.

[4] 7 Edw. 7, Cap. 56: An Act to facilitate the possession of land for certain Evicted Tenants in Ireland and for other purposes connected therewith, and to make provision with respect to the tenure of office by the Estates Commissioners (*Evicted Tenants* [*Ireland*] *Act*, 1907). The Act empowered the Estates Commissioners to acquire land by expropriation and settle on it farmers evicted by their landlords. But an amendment introduced in the House of Lords restricted the number of possible beneficiaries to 2,000.

The Act could not be said to have failed in view of the fact that by 1907 one-third of the cultivated area had changed hands as a result of the combined operation of the Land Act of 1903 and the earlier land purchase Acts. But from one point of view it had been too successful and the host of land-hungry peasants who took advantage of the law to demand land was so numerous that the funds available to satisfy them were giving out. In 1903 the Government had undertaken to issue land bonds to the annual value of £5,000,000 bearing interest at $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. But as a result of the general depreciation of government securities it now found itself obliged to borrow below par; in July 1907 the value of the bonds fell to 83. To make up the difference between the real price of issue and the nominal value of the bonds a clause in the Act of 1903 which no one seems to have noticed when it was passed[1] empowered the Government when certain allocations from the imperial budget had been exhausted to obtain the necessary funds from the Irish ratepayer. This actually happened in 1907. We can well imagine the indignation of these ratepayers, committed as they were to the principle that the entire United Kingdom, not Ireland alone, must pay the cost of a measure which they regarded as a reparation due to Ireland from Great Britain. What was to be done? Pay the landlord in bonds instead of cash? Make the sum required a first charge on the premium of 12 per cent which according to the provisions of the original statute was to be added to the money obtained by the loan? Issue bonds in future bearing 3 instead of $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent interest? Or simply make the Treasury bear the entire cost of the fall in Government securities? The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Asquith, informed the House that he was studying the question. He explained in language sufficiently mystifying that they were in search of an arrangement which would burden neither the British nor the Irish taxpayer. In any case, he added, the financial arrangement made in 1903 must be revised; he intended to reform it on 'a sounder and more equitable basis'.[2] In other words, the Land Act of 1903 was declared bankrupt. No one in the Nationalist party was displeased by the bankruptcy.

[1] If we can believe Wyndham (H. of C., July 5, 1907; *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxvii, pp. 1,019–20) he never intended to impose this burden on the Irish ratepayer. But his explanations are very involved and, when all is said, prove only that when the Bill was passed in 1903 everyone expected a rise not a fall in the value of Government securities. See Asquith's trenchant reply. (Same sitting ibid., p. 1,026.)

[2] H. of C., July 5, 1907 (*Parliamentary Debates*, vol. clxxvii, p. 1029).

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While the economic problems, for which the late Government had hoped to find a solution acceptable to all parties, were becoming once more a source of discontent, the great political and national question of Home Rule remained unsolved. On this point the Liberal party seemed bound by Gladstone's former pledge to the Nationalists which it had been prevented from performing already only by the opposition, twice repeated, of the House of Lords and the opinion of the majority of Englishmen. On the eve of forming his Cabinet Campbell-Bannerman, as we have already seen, had refused to yield to Lord Rosebery's demand and had solemnly declared that on this point, as on all others, he remained faithful to the tradition of Gladstone. Would he then reintroduce in its integrity, immediately after his accession to office, a Home Rule Bill on the lines of those rejected in 1886 and 1893? If the Liberal majority had not been so overwhelming and the eighty Irish members had held the fate of the Government in their hands they might perhaps have dared to demand it and the Cabinet have been compelled to obey their orders to its own ruin. But, as we know, this was very far from the case. Campbell-Bannerman was, therefore, in a position to restrict himself to the more prudent programme he had traced in November 1905, and secure for it the preliminary approval of the Nationalist leaders. He would persuade the Irish to accept a partial measure, an 'instalment' of representative control and administrative reform, by convincing them that not only was it no obstacle to a more radical programme but a step towards its accomplishment. What would be the nature of this 'payment on account' with which the Irish electorate was asked to be provisionally content? Bryce, the analyst of the American constitution, seemed at first sight better fitted than any other man to devise the necessary formulas and it would appear that during the summer of 1906 he opened negotiations through the channel of Sir Antony MacDonnell with the two heads of the National Irish League, Redmond and Dillon. In November it was rumoured that the Government had no intention at present of granting Ireland a Parliament and simply proposed to pursue the policy of 'devolution' the late Cabinet had adopted and dropped, by setting up in Dublin a body partly

elected, partly nominated by the executive, not to legislate but to supervise the execution of statutes passed at Westminster.[1] The negotiators no doubt found themselves faced by two problems. Should the new body be entrusted with the control of the police? What control should be given or refused to the clergy of the various denominations, particularly to the Catholic hierarchy, over the administration of the educational system set up by the British Parliament? When in December Bryce resigned his Secretaryship to go to the United States, the Unionists spread the report that it was because on the former question he had met with the successful opposition of Sir Antony MacDonnell. They went so far as to prophesy that Sir Antony would replace him as Chief Secretary.[2] It was an idiotic rumour. Sir Antony had never been a *persona grata* with the Nationalists, who regarded him as a traitor, who had espoused in Asia the cause of British imperialism and was only too ready to treat his Irish compatriots as Hindus. If they had accepted such a man their policy could have been indistinguishable from O'Brien's. In fact, according to reliable Nationalist testimony, Bryce had not been in the least disposed to grant the Irish more than MacDonnell advised, and his relations with Redmond and Dillon had been the reverse of cordial.[3] When he was succeeded by Augustine Birrell, a witty man of letters and a professional sceptic, who exchanged the Board of Education where he had not been a success for the Irish Secretaryship, the appointment was certainly regarded as a victory by the Nationalist leaders. Had he renewed negotiations with them? If he had, had at least a conditional agreement been reached? In any case, on May 7 Birrell, in whose honour the Nationalist members of Parliament had given a banquet the previous night, expounded the ministerial scheme.

The Bill introduced that day set up a central representative Council of 106 members, of whom eighty-two would be elected, twenty-four nominated by the executive. Of the forty-five Irish administrative departments, eight would be subject to its control. This seems very little, but we must remember that by reason of

[1] *The Times*, November 9, 1906.

[2] *The Times*, December 22, 1906.

[3] T. P. O'Connor, *Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*, p. 131. Cf. T. M. Healy's letter to his brother, March 16, 1906: 'Redmond is cogitating over some plan but what it is I don't know! Bryce is a Belfast man—without Morley's Irish sympathies. Antony MacDonnell is the driving power and his models are Hindu' (T. M. Healy, *Letters and Leaders of my Time*, vol. ii, p. 476).

their importance these eight departments, which included the Local Government Board, the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, the Congested Districts Board, and public education in all its branches, amounted to over half the Irish Administration.[1] It was estimated that these departments cost the nation £2,000,000 a year. To this estimate the Government proposed to add £650,000, and with this annual revenue of £2,650,000 to form an Irish Fund to be placed at the disposal of the Council, which if it had no legislative powers would at least possess within the limits of the eight departments specified by the Bill, entire control over the administration of the existing Irish Statutes, the sole reservation being the Lord Lieutenant's veto absolute or suspensory at his discretion upon any decision the Council might take. Of the police there was not a word. Birrell was content to point out that the number of departments subject to the Council's control might be subsequently extended and to remark that 'if the new Council after some years is a success, why, then, I dare say it may pave the way to Home Rule'. Nor was anything said about any right of the clergy to be elected to the Council, or any control they might be granted over the educational establishments of the country. On the contrary, it would seem that this control was abandoned unreservedly to an assembly of laymen elected by a suffrage practically universal.[2]

Redmond had no desire to oppose openly a Bill he personally liked. But he saw immediately how unlikely it was to win the approval of Irish public opinion. His language was therefore hesitating and he referred the decision to a national Convention of the party to be held within a few days in Dublin. A movement of opposition to the Bill was at once organized in Dublin, headed by the clergy. On May 14 the *Freeman's Journal* published the names of 107 priests who declared their intention to participate in the Convention. It met on the 21st. No Convention hitherto held in Ireland had been so well attended. It was Redmond who opened the proceedings by proposing a resolution which declared that Ireland could not be satisfied with half-measures and that 'they

[1] Augustine Birrell, speech at Queen's College, Belfast, November 23, 1907: 'He had done his best to enable the Irish people to administer their own affairs over seven-twelfths at least of the great departments of the Irish State.'

[2] The real short title of the Bill was 'Irish Council Bill'. But it became usual to refer to it as the 'Irish Councils Bill', which did much to prejudice Irish public opinion against it. The completely false impression was given that the Government was seeking to divide authority among several different councils.

should press upon the British Government with all their strength and power to introduce a measure for the establishment of a native Parliament, with a responsible Executive, having power over all purely Irish affairs'. The resolution was passed unanimously. In these circumstances, the Government had no choice but to withdraw the Irish Council Bill. Balfour was ready with ironical congratulations, calling the attention of Parliament to the queer experiment made by Campbell-Bannerman and his colleagues in 'governing Ireland in accordance with Irish ideas'.

Once again the policy of moderate concessions, of 'devolution', had failed. In 1905 it had been defeated by the intransigence of the Ulster loyalists. In 1907 it was faced by the intransigence of the Nationalists which was now assuming the novel form of a propaganda, mentioned this year for the first time in the London press, though actually Sinn Fein was already eight years old. But it had made its first appearance during the great outburst of nationalism which marked the centenary of the rebellion of 1798 and during the following years, when revolutionary feeling had temporarily died down in Ireland and the followers of O'Brien were working with Lord Dunraven's group to carry out immediate measures of economic reform, the stream of Sinn Fein, though its source did not dry up, flowed more or less underground. What was the creed of the new group? The leading figure of the movement, Arthur Griffith, in his paper, *The United Irishman*, made no direct attack on any form of Irish agitation. He was full of sympathy for the Gaelic League and its efforts to revive the Irish language. In principle he condemned neither parliamentary action nor armed revolt if circumstances should recommend either. But as things were they were both inopportune, and he advocated the employment of another method, borrowed, he said, from the Hungarians of 1861. The latter, who at that time were agitating for the re-establishment of the constitution of 1848, had acted as though it were still in force, taking the oath according to the forms then prescribed, paying no attention to official documents, and refusing to pay taxes. In a few years they had gained the victory. If the Irish wished to restore the constitution of 1782, illegally abolished by the Act of Union of 1800, they should follow this Hungarian example. No more members should be sent to Westminster, a council of Three Hundred should be set up in Dublin which would constitute a *de facto* Irish Parliament, and

courts of arbitration to whose jurisdiction loyal Irishmen would submit their disputes instead of employing the regular courts. The British Army, whose ranks and prestige had been swelled too long by Irish recruits, must be boycotted, also British goods whose importation had so long prevented the growth of a national industry. Foreign rule must be destroyed by a species of political strike or passive rebellion, refusal to co-operate with the established authority in any shape or form, the determination to do everything 'ourselves', 'ourselves alone', Sinn Fein. This was the programme publicly adopted by a National Council which met at Dublin on November 28, 1905, barely a week before the fall of Balfour's ministry, to embody Griffith's policy in a distinct organization. It was a programme, to speak Hindustani, of complete swadeshi.[1]

The moderation displayed during the following months by the Nationalist leaders, and their close alliance with the Liberal Government, assisted the propaganda of Sinn Fein. In the autumn of 1906 the movement counted only twenty 'branches',[2] two years later there were over a hundred.[3] The Nationalists noticed a falling off in the financial contributions received from America. It was because Sinn Fein was recruiting American subscribers to its funds. In January 1907, when the Corporation of Dublin was re-elected, Sinn Fein for the first time put forward candidates in opposition to the Nationalists. After the failure of the Irish Council Bill three Nationalist members of Parliament resigned on the ground that they had joined Sinn Fein and, when in September the Nationalist party wished to call a large public meeting in Dublin, they were obliged to transform it into a private meeting to prevent its capture by the Sinn Feiners.

There was no reason indeed to take too seriously a movement led by men who were cranks, even more than fanatics. But the success of their propaganda was nevertheless ominous. On the outskirts of the official Nationalist party Tim Healy made advances to Sinn Fein. The United Irish League broke away from the control of its founder, William O'Brien. Michael Devlin, who

[1] For the origins of Sinn Fein see Robert Mitchell Henry, *Modern Ireland in the Making: The Evolution of Sinn Fein*, 1920; George Lyons, *Some Recollections of George Griffith and his Times*, 1923; also Griffith's pamphlets, *The Sinn Fein Policy*, 1904; *The Resurrection of Hungary, A Parallel for Ireland*, 1905.

[2] Robert Mitchell Henry, *Modern Ireland in the Making* . . . p. 77.

[3] *Annual Register*, 1908, p. 257.

had just refurbished an old revolutionary association, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, with a programme less strictly Catholic but not less nationalist, introduced Hibernians into the local branches of the League. They prevented O'Brien from speaking at public meetings and finally compelled him to sign at Dublin on December 25, 1907, a formal treaty of peace with Redmond which amounted to a surrender, since it began by professing the creed of nationalism whole and undiluted. Under the potent influence of these heated nationalist passions Redmond's imagination caught fire; he celebrated the memory of the rebels of 1798 and held them up as an example to the rising generation. *The Freeman's Journal* paid homage to Sinn Fein and hinted that after all its programme was perhaps not irreconcilable with that of the party which looked to the *Journal* for guidance. At Westminster the Nationalist members officially declared that they reserved entire freedom of action unhampered by any engagement or obligation towards the Liberal majority. At Jarrow-on-Tyne, where a seat had fallen vacant, a Labour candidate had come forward in opposition to the Unionist and Liberal candidates. He was an Irishman by birth and expected on that ground to win from the Liberal candidate the votes of the large body of Irish workmen in the constituency. But the Irish would give their confidence only to a candidate completely their own. The presence of four rival candidates in this English constituency gave the momentary impression that the arrangement of parties had been totally dislocated. Was there then a complete rupture between the English Liberals and the Irish Nationalists? No. Personal relations between Redmond and Dillon on the one hand, and Campbell-Bannerman on the other, remained friendly. The former were therefore suspected of having adopted a more favourable attitude than they would admit towards the compromise proposed in May, and the latter, on the other hand, of willingness to advance further on the path of concession to Ireland, the moment circumstances became more propitious. When the session of 1908 opened, the latter suspicion proved well founded.

The Prime Minister and the Nationalist leader agreed that the latter should introduce in the House of Commons a motion affirming the principle of Home Rule, and that Campbell-Bannerman should accept it. The arrangement could not be fully carried out. Redmond was obliged to dispense with the presence of Campbell-

Bannerman, overtaken by the disease which would carry him off.[1] Nevertheless it was evident, two years after the General Election, that the mere fact that a Liberal Government was in office had made a compromise impossible, and that sooner or later, as at the close of the last century, England must decide for or against the programme of complete Home Rule.

3

Sooner or later, but certainly not immediately ! For the Liberal statesmen on the morrow of the General Election, the Irish question was not urgent. It was not on that question that the election had been fought. The claims of other clients must be met before those of the Irish Home Rulers, who did not even possess the means of putting pressure on the Liberal leaders. For the overwhelming Liberal majority swamped their eighty-four representatives. These clients were first and foremost the Nonconformists, aroused, as we have seen, from their political inertia by the Education Act of 1902. They had not been content with the agitation they conducted throughout the country by their 'passive resistance' to the rate collector when he called upon them to contribute by paying their rates to the support of the denominational schools. In every constituency they had organized the Liberal victory of 1906. They had never before sent so many members to a British Parliament. In this respect the Election of 1906 had effected nothing short of a revolution. Some 180 Dissenters sat in the new House.[2] The Congregationalists were best represented—as might have been expected of the most political and republican

[1] T. P. O'Connor, *Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*, 1908, pp. 156 sqq.; L. G. Redmond Howard, *John Redmond*, 1910, p. 217; J. A. Spender, *The Right Honourable Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*, 1923, vol. ii, p. 38.

[2] *Free Church Year Book*, 1906, p. 306: At a luncheon given by the Liberation Society on February 27, 1906, the chairman gave the following detailed figures, amounting to a slightly smaller total: Congregationalists 65; Wesleyans 30; Baptists 14; Presbyterians 22; Unitarians 14; Calvinistic Methodists 8; Primitive Methodists 7; Friends 7; United Methodists 3. To these figures we must add the seven or eight Nonconformists (probably Wesleyans or Unitarians) who were Unionist members. Nor was this simply a temporary phenomenon. At the General Election of January 1910 the number of dissenters elected was still no less than 125 (53 Congregationalists, 25 Wesleyans, 8 Calvinistic Methodists, 7 Primitive Methodists, 3 United Methodists, 15 Baptists, 7 Unitarians, 6 Quakers, 1 Presbyterian) (*Free Church Year Book*, 1910, p. 214)—that is to say, dissenters were returned for 125 of the 315 seats won by the Liberal and Labour parties, instead of 180 out of 430. The proportion is practically the same.

of the sects—but all had their representatives. When to these Dissenters we add thirteen Scotch Presbyterians,[1] sixteen Jews,[2] eighty Irish Catholics and a handful of English Catholics (less than ten), the number of members not belonging to the Church of England reaches 300. With a loss of only forty more seats, the Established Church would not have possessed a majority in the Commons. Nothing similar had been witnessed since the days of Cromwell. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Asquith, and the President of the Board of Education, Augustine Birrell, were at least of Nonconformist origin. Lloyd George was the hero of Welsh Nonconformity. The entire Protestant world outside the Church of England expected as its strict right the immediate repeal of the Act of 1902.

On April 6, 1906, Augustine Birrell expounded in the House of Commons the main features of the Government's Bill. The first clause would lay down the principle that no school should be recognized as a public elementary school unless it was a school provided by the local educational authority. In other words, no denominational teaching would be given in any public elementary school. This did not mean that public education would be strictly secular. An amendment introduced in this sense when the clauses of the Bill were being discussed received only sixty-three votes, and an amendment moved by Chamberlain—he had never liked the Act of 1902 and this intervention was his last escapade before he disappeared from political life—relieving teachers from the obligation of giving religious instruction, while giving parents the right to secure for their children whatever denominational instruction they preferred, to be given in school but at their own cost, received only 172. The only form of religious instruction which would be legal in future and would, in fact, be given almost universally would be undenominational teaching, simple Bible teaching it was usually termed, to be given by the teacher himself. Special arrangements could still be made with those non-provided schools which were compelled by lack of funds to seek financial aid from the State. Clause 2 of the Bill laid down the principles by which they would be governed. The local authority would become responsible for the upkeep of the buildings and would

[1] *Free Church Year Book*, 1906, p. 306.

[2] There were 32 Jewish candidates (15 Unionists, 17 Liberals). Of these 16 were returned (12 Liberals, 4 Conservatives). There had been 12 Jews in the House of Commons returned in 1900, 8 Unionists and 4 Liberals (*Jewish World*, quoted by *The Times*, February 1, 1906).

have the right to alter or enlarge them. Outside school hours they would remain at the owners' free disposal, but during school hours the local authority would have entire control—that is to say, in country districts the Nonconformist child would no longer be obliged to receive Anglican instruction. The Bill, in the language of a Liberal speaker, was the Magna Carta of the village Nonconformist.

The measure was not in reality quite so simple as this. Those former free schools, which in 1902 had become the non-provided schools of the new system, if they wished to remain public elementary schools, could nevertheless obtain special facilities for the denominational teaching they had given hitherto. It must not exceed two hours a week. The cost could not be defrayed by the local authority and it could not be given during the hours when the children were obliged to attend school nor by a teacher employed by the public authority. These 'ordinary facilities', to use the jargon of the Bill, of which the Anglican Church might take advantage, were obviously extremely restricted. It was not the same with the 'extended facilities' granted in urban areas, that is in every borough or urban district whose population exceeded 5,000, if four-fifths of the parents asked for them, and provided there were in the same locality other schools which could be attended by children whose parents objected to this religious instruction. What in fact were these schools to which this clause accorded special privileges? With the exception of the Jewish schools in the East End of London they were Catholic schools founded for the use of the Irish proletariat of all the large towns in the kingdom. The Liberals could not dispense with the Irish vote, the Labour party still less. This curiously illogical concession was the result. The Government hoped by this Bill to satisfy the Nonconformists in the country districts without depriving the Irish Catholics of the advantages conferred upon them by the Act of 1902. In the event the Bill roused the opposition, as violent as it was legitimate, of the Anglican Church without satisfying either the militant Nonconformists, indignant at the favour shown to Roman Catholicism, or the Catholics themselves, who were not content even with the 'extended facilities' they were offered. Clause 4, which defined these facilities, left the local authority free to grant or refuse them. The Catholics demanded that it should be compelled to grant them. The Bill passed its third reading on

Monday, July 30, by a majority of only 169. It was a considerable majority, no doubt, but far less than the normal majority for a Government measure. The Irish Nationalists had voted solidly against the Bill. And if the Nonconformists had voted for it, it was with reluctance.

4

The Bill had now to face the House of Lords, where the Anglican Church was supreme and Catholicism well represented, but the Nonconformists the merest handful. The House of Lords did not throw out the Bill straightaway. It passed the first and second readings at the beginning of August. But when the House reassembled in October and it was debated clause by clause, the Lords transformed it into a measure of a totally different character. They 'extended' the 'extended facilities' to rural as well as urban areas, requiring moreover the consent of only two-thirds of the parents instead of four-fifths. They authorized the teachers to give denominational instruction, and this not only in the non-provided schools under the Act of 1902, but also in the provided schools. The Bill, as shaped by the joint labours of the Government and the House of Commons, empowered the local authorities to take over the free schools on certain conditions; as remodelled by the House of Lords it obliged them to do so. Indeed, the Lords went still further and repealing a provision of the Act of 1870 which the legislature had not dared to touch in 1902, deprived the local authorities of the right, of which a very small minority had taken advantage,[1] to give no religious instruction

[1] Not, however, from the point of view we should call in France '*laique*'. See the interesting remarks by Ramsay MacDonald, 'The Education Bill; the Secular Solution' (*Fortnightly Review*, vol. lxxxix, p. 715: April 15, 1908): 'It is of some interest to observe that the areas in England and Wales where no religious instruction in public schools is given are found mostly in districts where "conversion" is regarded as the essential characteristic of religion. Out of the 70 schools in Cardigan for instance, 66 have no such instruction; out of the 100 in Carmarthen, 62 are purely secular. The fact that in Wales there are over 160 schools with a time-table which is purely secular, so far from condemning the religious indifference of the Principality, ought really to be put in the forefront of the reasons showing how religiously minded the Welshman is.' Clause 7 of the *Code of Instructions for Public Elementary Schools* 1906 authorized teachers to add to their lessons of English history lessons in citizenship. But the Cabinet categorically rejected Chiozza Money's proposal to make this instruction in citizenship compulsory (H. of C., July 5, 1906; *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clx, p. 237). The *Report of the Board of Education* quotes the language used in this clause of the code when it lays down that this secular moral instruction may be 'either incidental, occasional and given as opportunity arises, or given systematically as a course of graduated instruction. The teaching should be brought home to the children by

whatever in the schools. In future, no school would be supported by public money, which did not find a place in its time-table for religious instruction.

What would the Government do? Work through the Bill again clause by clause, making concessions to the Upper Chamber on a particular clause, refusing them on another? It would be an endless task. The Cabinet decided to ask the Commons to reject the Lords amendments *en bloc* and on December 12 the House voted accordingly by a majority of 416 to 107. Nevertheless, there was still hope of saving the Bill. Why not attempt to reach a compromise between the two Houses by private negotiations? It would seem that the Archbishop of Canterbury was in favour of the suggestion. He remained throughout on friendly and even intimate terms with the Prime Minister. But Balfour thought otherwise, and rejected the proposals made by the Government, though they were in fact so conciliatory that they would no doubt have rendered the Bill unacceptable to the Radicals if by chance the Unionist leaders had accepted them. He regarded the Act of 1902 as his own work, possibly his masterpiece, and wanted it preserved in its entirety. Moreover, as an expert parliamentary tactician he perceived that it was a favourable opportunity to avenge his crushing defeat at the polls the previous January. Apparently, the country was up in arms for or against the Bill. The debates in the House of Commons had been heated. Only a ruthless application of the closure had enabled them to be concluded in three months. And the galleries had been crowded throughout. The Established Church, the Catholics, the Protestant sects had multiplied public meetings, petitions, demonstrations of every description. But, despite appearances, the agitation was superficial. The great mass of the electorate took no interest in the struggle, and the Anglican Church and the supporters of the *status quo* could take advantage of their indifference. By refusing any amicable arrangement he defied the Government to appeal to the country by dissolving

reference to their actual surroundings in town or country and should be illustrated as vividly as possible by stories, poems, quotations, proverbs, and examples drawn from history or biography'. The report adds: 'The whole subject of Moral Instruction needs careful handling. . . . Though few would care to deny that morals can be taught to children apart from the truth of revealed religion, yet as they are closely bound up with religion and derive their surest sanctions from religion, great care must be taken to avoid any conflict of laws or clashing of canons. To do this may seem difficult until the experiment is made' (pp. 24-5).

Parliament. 'They will not dissolve,' he declared; 'they know better.'[1]

And in fact, when the House of Lords on December 17, on the motion of Lord Lansdowne, maintained its amendments by a majority of 142 to fifty-three, the Prime Minister simply dropped the Bill on which both Houses had wasted so many months. After this, it was all very well for Campbell-Bannerman to dub Balfour in irony 'director-in-chief' of both Houses.[2] He only enhanced his opponent's prestige. Chamberlain banished by ill-health from the party arena, and the Act of 1902 saved from the grave peril which threatened it at the beginning of the year, he was in truth the hero of the hour. Lloyd George might deliver attacks on the Upper House which King Edward regarded as a breach of constitutional usage.[3] And the Premier might arouse the applause of the Commons by his declaration, 'that a way must be found, a way will be found, by which the will of the people expressed through their elected representatives in this House will be made to prevail'.[4] These were but distant threats. The Constitution did indeed provide a means to enforce immediately the will of the nation, an appeal to the country by dissolving Parliament. But it was a step which Campbell-Bannerman and his colleagues dared not take.

5

The King's speech which opened the session of 1907 did not even allude to education. It merely contained a passing threat addressed to the House of Lords and the announcement that the Cabinet had under consideration the best method of settling disputes between the two Houses. But something must be done to repair the disastrous effect produced by the defeat of the Education Bill. The West Riding County Council had refused in 1906 to pay the teachers of four non-provided schools that portion of their salary which in the Council's opinion was the remuneration for their denominational instruction. The refusal had been pro-

[1] Speech at the Junior Constitutional Club, November 28, 1906.
[2] H. of C., December 11, 1906 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxvii, p. 157).
[3] Speech at the Palmerston Club at Oxford, December 1, 1906. For the King's protests see J. A. Spender, *The Life of the Right Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*, vol. ii, pp. 313 sqq.
[4] H. of C., December 20, 1906 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxvii, p. 1740).

nounced illegal by the Court of first instance, legal by the Court of Appeal, and finally illegal by the House of Lords in its capacity as supreme court of appeal at the very moment when as a legislature it had defeated the Education Bill in December. Why not legalize by an express Statute a procedure as to whose present legality the judges were divided? A Bill to this effect, consisting of a single clause, was introduced on February 26 by MacKenna, who had just succeeded Birrell at the Board of Education. The Bill relieved the local authorities of the cost—estimated at a fifteenth of the education rate—of the religious instruction given in non-provided schools. It was sufficient to alarm the Anglicans, too little to placate the Dissenters. Nothing more was heard of the Bill, which was silently dropped by the Government at the close of the session.

If, however, legislation was evidently extremely difficult, indeed practically impossible, could not some indirect method be found by which the Ministry might achieve its object without having to face the opposition of the House of Lords? By a series of administrative regulations the Board of Education laid down the principle that no financial assistance should be given to the training colleges, often private foundations of an Anglican complexion,[1] unless they undertook not to impose any denominational test upon their pupils.[2] It extended the application of this rule to institutions for secondary education and without going back on the past decided that no financial aid should be given to them unless the majority of the board of managers were nominees of the public authority and if any denominational test was imposed

[1] The *Report of the Board of Education* for the year 1909–10 gives interesting statistics as to the training colleges of both descriptions, denominational and undenominational—for the three preceding school years. In 1907–8 the denominational training colleges provided 4,945 places, the undenominational 6,001; in 1908–9 the denominational 4,903, the undenominational 6,974; in 1909–10 the denominational 4,862, the undenominational 7,431—that is to say, the undenominational training colleges had made indisputable progress, the denominational had remained stationary. The insignificant decline in the number of places is explained by the transfer of two colleges from primary to secondary education. During the following years, as a result of the financial aid given by the Board of Education to the foundation of new training colleges, the balance in favour of the undenominational colleges steadily increased. In 1914 there were twice as many places available in the undenominational training colleges as in the denominational (S. J. G. Moore, *The Schools and Social Reform: The Report of the Unionist Social Reform Committee on Education, with an introduction by the Right Hon. F. E. Smith*, 1914, p. 37).

[2] This, we must once more assert, was not secularism. In 1907 the Government officials even attempted, though the attempt failed, to reinforce in training colleges for primary school teachers the obligation of religious though undenominational instruction. See two articles by Graham Wallas, *The Nation*, July 10, 24, 1909.

on managers or teachers. Moreover, the Government could have recourse to the expedient of introducing into the Budget a special credit which constitutional usage would not allow the House of Lords to reject, since by universal consent it could not amend the Budget. Admittedly in violation of a clause in the Education Act of 1870 a credit of £100,000 was provided to enable the local authority to construct a school in any district where it seemed desirable to destroy the monopoly of the Anglican Church.[1]

This was all, and despite the indignant protests of the opposition speakers it did not amount to much. The Bill to settle disputes between the two Houses, which the speech from the throne had seemed to foreshadow, never made its appearance. The only step taken was to introduce on June 24 a motion which affirmed that the right assumed by the Upper House to amend or reject Bills sent up by the Lower must be so restricted as to secure that the will of the Commons should prevail before the life of the Parliament had expired. After animated debates which occupied three sittings the motion was carried amid loud applause by 432 to 147 votes– that is to say, by a majority of 285. English Nonconformists and Irish Catholics at enmity for the past eighteen months made a united front against the common enemy. But it was nothing more than a declaration of principle. When would the Government attempt to apply it? When would it dare to give battle?

A final attempt was made in 1908 to solve this question of religious teaching in primary schools—a permanent sore of English politics. During the closing months of 1907 the President of the Board of Education had promised a simple and short Bill. But the Bill whose principles he explained to the House of Commons on February 24, 1908, was in fact as complicated as its predecessor of 1906. The first clause laid down that there should be only one category of public elementary school, in which the teachers should not be subject to any religious test and the only type of religious instruction permitted would be the simple Bible teaching given in all or almost all board schools since 1870. As was pointed out in the debate which followed, this provision marked a greater departure from secularism than the Act of 1870, for the

[1] H. of C., July 11, 1907, Arthur Balfour's speech and MacKenna's explanations (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxviii, pp. 67 sqq.). H. of L., July 25, 1907. Lord Londonderry's speech and Lord Crewe's reply (ibid., vol. clxxix, pp. 17 sqq.).

elementary schools lost the right, which they had hitherto possessed, to give no religious instruction.[1] The continued existence of the free schools was recognized and they could even be assisted by grants from the central government on a scale more liberal than before 1907, but only if they did not possess the monopoly of teaching in a particular locality, that is to say if the parish, to use the current phraseology, was not a single school parish, if the number of pupils was not less than twenty, and the standard of such a school both hygienic and educational should be certified by an inspector as not inferior to that of the provided schools supported by the rates. When free schools were transferred to the public authority, denominational teaching would still be permissible provided it was not given by the teacher and was given out of school hours or on a Sunday or holiday.

Faced with this new Bill the Anglican episcopate was not content with a mere *non possumus*. On March 30 the Bishop of Saint-Asaph introduced an alternative Bill in the House of Lords, inspired on certain points by the advice given at the end of 1906 by the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was a compromise based on mutual concessions. While recognizing that the Nonconformists had a legitimate grievance in the country districts, it asked them to recognize in their turn the legitimacy of the Anglican counterclaim in the urban areas where the former board schools, the provided schools of 1902, were in a majority. There would, therefore, be only one category of school in which the teachers would be free to give or not to give the religious instruction, and the normal religious instruction would be undenominational, but on three days a week those children whose parents desired it might receive denominational instruction provided it was not at the public expense. Whereas the Bill of 1906 might be regarded as an attempt to unite Nonconformists and Catholics against Anglicanism, a compromise was now proposed between Nonconformists and Anglicans from whose benefit the Catholics would be excluded. Lengthy negotiations were carried on throughout the spring and summer. Campbell-Bannerman had been dead for several months and MacKenna had been replaced at the Board of Education by Runciman when the latter began an official correspondence with the Archbishop of Canterbury with the object of drafting a Bill acceptable both to the Liberal majority in the

[1] Graham Wallas: Letter to the *Manchester Guardian*, November 1, 1908.

House of Commons and to the House of Lords. In its amended form the Bill was made public on November 20. To ensure its success a settlement committee was formed at the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury which was immediately joined by seven bishops and several leading Nonconformists. But when the Representative Church Council met on December 3 the bishops were faced with the opposition of their own laity.

The motive which had brought together the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, the Wesleyan, Scott Lidgett, and the Congregationalist, Sylvester Horne, was fear lest Parliament, weary of their disputes, might cut the knot by secularizing the provided schools. The stalwarts of the Anglican Church, the followers of Lord Halifax and the Cecils, were not so timid, and with good reason. They perceived that in exchange for the right of admission given to Anglican clergymen in the provided schools, they would sacrifice the monopoly hitherto possessed by the parsons in the rural areas. When a motion opposing the Bill was submitted to the Council, only three bishops out of twenty-one supported it, but it was carried nevertheless by 189 to 99 votes. The Bill was therefore dropped by the Government amid universal indifference.[1] No one wanted to hear anything more of this dispute between the Church and the sects about religious education in the schools.

6

This abandonment by the Radical party of its educational programme will not surprise our readers if they recall what we said in our last volume of the decline of Nonconformity in England at the close of the nineteenth century. The shock given by the Edu-

[1] Though the public cared nothing, the small group for whom the question had a special interest continued to discuss it. See Athelstan Riley, Michael Sadler, Cyril Jackson, *The Religious Question in Public Education: A Critical Examination Scheme Representing Various Points of View*, 1911. In most districts an agreement would seem to have been reached to recommend to the teachers a syllabus of religious teaching which, though undogmatic, and from one point of view for that reason, was less biblical and therefore more remote from the traditional Nonconformist creed and more acceptable to Anglicans. For this movement, which we cannot study in detail here, see Sir G. Croydon Mark's speech in the House of Commons, March 8, 1912 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 5th Series, vol. xxxv, pp. 692 sqq.); also A. J. Mundella, *The Place of Religious Teaching in a National System of Public Schools: 'Hard Facts for Legislators'; Address to the Education Settlement Committee*, July 11, 1912; *The Cambridgeshire Syllabus of Religious Teaching for Schools*, Ed. 1, 1924, the prototype of the new type of syllabus. For the spread of the new methods see *Religious Instruction in Provided Schools in England and Wales*, 4th Edition (revised), November 1931.

cation Act of 1902, the violent reaction of the sects, the passive resistance movement and the victory at the polls in January 1906, may well have fostered among the Nonconformists the illusion that the progressive decline of their sects had been checked and the Anglican Church would pay the penalty for presuming on their weakness. In support of this belief they could still appeal to many healthy signs. The Welsh 'revival' was one. Another was the 'new movement' organized among the Wesleyans by Hugh Price Hughes, which sought to regain contact with the masses by founding 'missions' in the suburbs of the large towns. Moreover, the Wesleyans had opened a subscription on a large scale to purchase a property in the heart of London next door to the Anglican Westminster Abbey and the Catholic Westminster Cathedral, on which to install their administrative and religious headquarters. Finally, at Selly Oak, near Birmingham, the Quakers had founded their admirable institution for free theological teaching, training for foreign missions and peace propaganda. But the final, and to all seeming irremediable, defeat of the agitation against the Education Act, in spite of the powerful Nonconformist representation in Parliament, was a bad symptom, so bad that it seemed to outweigh all the favourable symptoms. And it was not the only one.

In the first place, there was the decline which we have remarked already, but which continued to make progress, of those fissiparous tendencies which constitute the very essence of what the English call Congregationalism and distinguish the English sects from the Protestants of the Continent. This Congregationalism had enabled the sects to develop by multiplying independent groups, by division and schism rather than by organization. Now, however, the Roman principle of unity began to attract these religious anarchists. The Baptists furnished themselves with superintendents, a term borrowed from the Wesleyan body, the Congregationalists with moderators, who were nothing less than a species of bishops exempt from the control of the independent groups. And the same tendency manifested itself in the appointment of special ministers to administer the large funds collected from Baptist and Congregational subscribers to maintain the central organization, support the pastors and provide retiring pensions for them. Besides this movement towards a more unified organization within the individual sects, there was a movement towards reunion

between the sects themselves. Among the Methodists the scheme sponsored by Hugh Price Hughes for a general reunion of their branches had indeed failed, for the moment at least. But the union of three sects, the United Methodist Free Churches, the Methodist New Connexion and the Bible Christians, sanctioned in 1907 by a Statute, constituted a preliminary success for the advocates of 'Methodist Union'.[1] In Scotland the same tendency was displayed by the reunion of the two great branches of free Presbyterianism —the Free Church of Scotland and the United Free Church. It was effected in 1900. Though faced in 1904 with an adverse decision of the courts to which a dissident minority of the United Free Church had appealed, the union finally triumphed over these difficulties, and a movement was already taking shape for a reunion with the Established Church itself.

The sects, as we should expect, interpreted this movement towards unity as a sign of life. That it was in reality the reverse is proved by the annual statistics of the Free Churches. In the closing years of the last century their numbers had grown very slowly, all out of proportion to the rapid growth of the population. Even this slow increase had now ceased. After the temporary stimulus caused by the Welsh revival, every year witnessed a constant decline in the number of those who communicated, in other words, regularly attended the services of the Free Churches. From 1906 to 1907 there was a decrease of 27,000 communicants, from 1907 to 1908 a decrease of 6,000, from 1908 to 1909 a decrease of 7,000 and from 1909 to 1910 a decrease of 24,000. While honestly publishing these disconcerting figures, whose effect was doubly disastrous at a moment when they were being defeated by the Anglicans on the education question, the Nonconformists attempted to dispute their significance. The fact, they argued, that their

[1] An Act to authorize the union of the Methodist New Connexion, the Bible Christians and the United Methodist Free Churches under the name of 'The United Methodist Church', to deal with real and personal property belonging to the said Churches or denominations, to provide for the vesting of the said property in trust for the United Church so formed and for the assimilation of the trust thereof and for other purposes (*United Methodist Church Act*). There had been seven Methodist Churches, there were now only five. The new group which took the name of United Methodist Church with 88,801 communicants (increased in 1908 to 164,071) ranked fourth after the Wesleyans with 628,693 communicants, the Primitive Methodists with 203,128, and the Calvinistic Methodists with 189,164. Apart from these four powerful Methodist Churches with a total communicant membership exceeding 1,000,000, there remained only two tiny groups, the Independent Methodists with 9,754 communicants and the Wesleyan Reform Union with 8,689. It is obvious how much easier complete reunion had now become. Yet it was not effected until 1929.

figures were computed on a stringent basis, far more stringent than the Anglican statistics, placed them at a disadvantage. Among the Wesleyans or Baptists, to be classed as a 'communicant' it was not sufficient to communicate once a year, at Easter, as in the Anglican body.[1] But this had always been the case, and on whatever basis, lax or stringent, the figures were calculated, the decrease in Nonconformist membership remained an incontestable fact. The Nonconformists also pointed out that their Churches were becoming steadily more wealthy, that a subscription organized by the Baptists in the opening year of the century had produced £250,000, a Wesleyan subscription a little later £100,000, and that the Nonconformist Churches were spending on their Sunday Schools and social activities of every description more than they had ever spent.[2] But this fact, when taken in combination with the decline in the number of members, proves that the Free Churches had become richer only because they had become more middle-class, suggests that the public spirit which impelled all these wealthy men to subscribe so liberally should not be confused with profound religious conviction, and in any case makes it plain that the Free Churches were not only out of touch with the labouring masses among whom a century and a half before the new-born Wesleyan movement had won such amazing victories, but were losing the allegiance of the classes which till lately had given it. 'More chapels are being built,' we read in the *Free Church Year Book for* 1911, 'and more churches too.... The Churches are vying with each other to attract worshippers; music, lecture programmes, comfortable seats, and, generally speaking, well-prepared sermons, beckon the people in, but do they come? We are again face to face with the old tragedy, the tragedy of our work—the masses of the people, all immortal souls, are not touched. It used to be the fashion to make this lament, as relating to the working classes; the truth is—and we must face its startling reality—the educated middle-class, especially the young people, are losing touch altogether with the House of God.'[3]

[1] *Free Church Year Book*, 1913, p. 289.

[2] Letter from Dr. Clifford to *The Times*. *The Times*, May 6, 1913.

[3] *Free Church Year Book*, 1911, p. 290. Cf. *Free Church Year Book*, 1910, p. 270: 'It will be seen that the Evangelical Free Churches now provide 8,662,691 sittings, an increase of more than 100,000 over last year's figures, without reckoning the unclassified; while there is a decrease of nearly 7,000 in the number of communicants.'

7

Was the ground lost by the sects won by the Church of England? For a moment it would seem Anglicans were disposed to cherish this pleasing belief. Their victory on the education question encouraged optimism, and statistics confirmed it. For some years the number of Anglicans continued to increase, while the Nonconformist 'communicants' decreased. But in the first place, the increase was extremely slow, very far from keeping pace with the growth of population. And it was soon followed by a fairly rapid decrease, whereas the decrease in Nonconformist membership tended rather to slacken. Moreover, the Established Church was still faced with a shortage of clergy. And it was threatened by a danger far more serious than the competition of the sects, namely that revival of Catholicism, Anglican and Roman, whose progress we have already had occasion to relate.

A Royal Commission, appointed in 1904 to inquire into the growth of ritualism,[1] reported that the serious nature of the conflict was the impotence of the bishops to prevent all these ritual innovations which were in effect repudiations of Protestantism, and that the only way in which their authority might perhaps be strengthened was to legalize, if necessary by an express statute, a host of practices which the rigid Protestantism of half a century before would have regarded as intolerable. But at what point was it possible to fix the limits of this legal toleration? Alone among the Churches throughout the world the Church of England presented the paradox of an episcopal Church whose bishops traditionally lacked power to coerce. Moreover, not satisfied with the toleration they enjoyed, certain Anglo-Catholic clergymen had themselves ordained priests and the public witnessed with increasing equanimity conversions to Roman Catholicism.[2] A cousin of

[1] A Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the alleged prevalence of breaches or neglect of the Law relating to the conduct of Divine Service for the Churches of England, and to the ornament and fitting of Churches; and to consider the existing powers and procedure applicable to such irregularities and to make such recommendations as may be deemed requisite for dealing with the aforesaid matters, April 23, 1904.

[2] For the movement towards Catholicism see two interesting compilations. *Roads to Rome: Being personal records of some of the more recent converts to the Catholic Faith, With an Introduction by His Emminence Cardinal Vaughan, Archbishop of Westminster, 1892–1903*, compiled and edited by J. Godfrey Raupert, Edition 3, 1908. It contains sixty-five short accounts of converts who give the reasons for their conversion. Also *Converts to Rome: A biographical list of the more notable converts to the Catholic Church in the United Kingdom during*

the King was converted to marry the King of Spain. A Eucharistic Congress was held in London, and although yielding to protests the Government refused to allow a public procession of the Blessed Sacrament, a large Catholic procession nevertheless took place in the London streets in the neighbourhood of Westminster Cathedral. It was known that King Edward had asked to be released from the obligation of declaring the worship of the Virgin and the sacrifice of the Mass 'superstitious and idolatrous',[1] and though the Parliament of 1906 could not find time to deal with the question, it would shortly be settled to the satisfaction of the Catholics.[2] How unreal the battle between the Church and the Sects must have been when the only question which seriously fluttered the ecclesiastical dovecots was the battle in the Church of England between the Evangelicals and the Liberals on the one hand, and the Anglo-Catholics on the other, or rather, since within the Church the Anglo-Catholic victory was well in sight, if indeed it had not already been won, the battle between the entire church, including the Anglo-Catholics and Roman Catholicism.

Protestantism was on the decline. Hilaire Belloc and Chesterton were doing their utmost to bring it into ridicule while rehabilitating Catholicism and it was a sign of the times that in popular drama the Catholic priest was no longer the traitor, the Jesuit unmasked at the close by the combined efforts of honest folk. Now the playwright very often made him the providential instrument of dramatic justice. In the world of affairs, the Jewish financier bent on luxury and display was replacing the Puritan man of business who toiled conscientiously to acquire wealth as though fulfilling a stern duty. Throughout the great mass of the population, more indulgent than formerly to Catholicism, but more remote than ever from conversion, there prevailed an increasing hostility to asceticism or religious pessimism of any kind. That Catholicism left man the hope of purgatory was put to its credit, but it was blamed for leaving him exposed to the fear of

the last sixty years, compiled and edited by W. Gordon Gorman, new and enlarged edition, 1910. This is the tenth edition, containing 6,700 names. The first, which bore the title *Rome's Recruits*, was published in 1876. 'This list', the author explains, 'is in no way a numbering of the people, but a record of a spiritual change among the intellectual classes of these islands' (p. 10). And again: 'It will be found by a cursory inspection of the list that there is hardly an English noble family that has not given one or more of its members to the Roman Catholic Church' (p. 1).

[1] Sir Sidney Lee, *King Edward VII.* . . . Vol. ii, pp. 22 sqq.

[2] 10 Edw. 7 and 1 Geo. V, Cap. 29: An Act to alter the form of the Declaration required to be made by the Sovereign on Accession (*Accession Declaration Act*, 1910).

hell. Religion was expected to foster a humanitarian optimism, to offer the human race and even the individual a guarantee of health and happiness on earth.[1] H. G. Wells and Bernard Shaw, whose readers were ten or rather a hundred times more numerous than those of Belloc and Chesterton, professed a sort of religion of progress which borrowing ideas from Bergson's *Evolution Créatrice* and confining itself strictly to the sensible universe, attempted a spiritual interpretation of evolution. Powerful currents from the warm countries of the south, Jewish, Catholic, but above all pagan, were battering and crumbling the wavebeaten cliff of Nordic Protestantism.

From all this it is clear that the Nonconformist campaign against the Education Act was defeated far more by the general apathy than by the obstinate resistance of the Anglicans. And this apathy was nowhere more profound than in the Government departments. We must not imagine that the Education Bills successively introduced by the Ministry only to be defeated by the Lords or dropped in the Commons were the work of the Board of Education, resentful that its freedom of action had been hampered since 1902 by Anglican interference. In fact, the Education Act of 1902 had been drafted under the ægis of Sir Robert Morant, who was still the autocrat of the Board and whose despotism would continue until 1911 when he would be driven from his throne by a revolt of the Union of Teachers.[2] Others less kindly disposed towards the Church of England were quick to perceive the advantages the Board derived from the concordat of 1902. So far as secondary education was concerned, these were in-

[1] See, for example, Margaret Ethel MacDonald's quaint criticism of a friend who lived a life of remarkable self-sacrifice and had no religious faith: '. . . I should imagine, if Christ's teaching is true, or if there is anything divine in our moral sense and in human love and self-sacrifice, that ——'s life is more acceptable to God than that of the majority of orthodox religious people of whatever sect. *Only I think if she believed in God she would take more care of herself, she is rather weary of life and does not trouble to take proper food and rest.*' (Quoted by J. R. MacDonald, *Margaret Ethel MacDonald*, p. 70).

[2] For the episode of the Holmes circular which condemned the practice of choosing elementary school inspectors too exclusively from the pupils of elementary schools and thus arousing the formidable antagonism of all the teachers, see F. H. Hayward, *Educational Administration and Criticism: A Sequel to the Holmes Circular, with a preface by John Adams*, 1912. Also H. of C., April 4, July 13, 1911 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1911, 5th Series, vol. xxiii, pp. 2155 sqq.; vol. xxviii, pp. 434 sqq.). 'We have a new Minister of Education, supported, we have no doubt, by a new permanent secretary. Sir Robert Morant, who has been so long the dominant figure of the Board, watching Minister after Minister flit before him like shadows in the cave, has passed on to another task, taking with him, we believe, the thanks of many friends of educational progress and perhaps hearing, as he goes, a sigh of relief from those who found his hand too heavy' (*Times Educational Supplement*, January 2, 1912).

disputable. The old independent grammar schools in which the influence of the Anglican Church was predominant had been swept away, to be replaced by new schools where the authority of the Church was reduced to a minimum, if not completely destroyed. Midway between elementary and secondary education the rapidly multiplying technical schools, and classes for adults, had literally no place for religion in their curricula. And even in the domain of elementary education the Act of 1902, which had been so widely regarded as the salvation of the denominational schools, turned out as time went, to be less favourable to the Church than had been originally believed. The right possessed by the Board of Education to inspect the denominational schools, who now received their share of the rates on the same footing as the undenominational, provided a thousand pretexts, if the Board wished, for making their existence hard. Moreover, these schools were usually village schools. As the depopulation of the country districts proceeded the number of children attending them diminished. Some had even to be closed. On the contrary, in the crowded urban centres, which were steadily growing, the new schools opened belonged to the category of the old board schools. An increase was therefore soon witnessed in the number of children attending the provided schools, a decrease in the number attending the non-provided, and the Church of England suffered under the new system as under the old.[1] The change to be dreaded was a compromise of the kind arranged in 1908 between certain Anglican bishops and Nonconformist leaders, by which the parsons would lose their monopoly of the village school in return for the right of entry into all schools without exception. This, however, was just what the teachers in the public elementary schools would not brook. They were willing to submit to the obligation of giving their pupils every day a perfunctory religious lesson, if at that price they could prevent intruders invading premises they regarded as their exclusive domain. Thus the *status quo* found an increasing number of defenders, not only among those who took no interest in education but among those who, precisely because

[1] When the Bill of 1902 was passed 2,000,000 children were being educated in the board schools, 2,000,000 in the voluntary schools. (For the figures in 1895 see my *History of the English People*, vol. v, p. 165.) In 1913–14, 3,313,488 children were attending the provided schools as against 2,069,136 attending the non-provided (*Board of Education. Statistics of Public Education in England and Wales. Educational Statistics.* 1913–14, p. 271). In 1930 the figures were respectively 4,049,263 and 1,943,893 (*Education in 1930. Being the report of the Board of Education and the Statistics of Public Education for England and Wales*, 1931, p. 113).

they were enthusiastic educationalists, were disgusted with these ecclesiastical bickerings. Loud as was the din of the combat, after all completely barren, which during the years that followed the election of January 1906 raged between Anglicans, Catholics, and Nonconformists, it was matched by the silence which enveloped the extensive work of reform accomplished by the joint labours of Parliament and the Board of Education.

8

When the Liberal Cabinet on the morrow of its advent to power was confronted with the many questions connected with public education, it was not content with attempting to satisfy the Nonconformists. When Birrell introduced his Bill he expressed his regret that the problem of religious instruction occupied public attention so exclusively to the neglect of other and more important educational problems. In addition to a number of provisions dealing with endowments, his Bill contained a clause which empowered the County Councils to devolve a portion of their educational functions to subordinate bodies functioning over a more limited area, thus effecting a species of decentralization which would amount to a partial return to the system of school boards. The Bill was also accompanied by a further Bill 'consolidating' all previous Education Bills including the new Bill of 1906 if it were passed. Officials of the Board of Education would no longer be in danger of losing their way in a maze of enactments, some of them three-quarters of a century old. They would have to apply only a single comprehensive Statute. Of all these ambitious projects not one survived the defeat of Birrell's Bill. But we have already seen how after 1907 partly by administrative regulations, in part also by legislation, the Government contrived to effect a series of partial reprisals. And these reprisals were not solely concerned with the everlasting battle over denominational teaching in the schools. In the purely secular sphere they did much to render the elementary schools more efficient, the secondary schools more democratic.

To take first the improvements effected in elementary education. Already in this year 1906, otherwise so barren, the Government carried an act authorizing the Scottish school boards to pro-

vide for the education and conveyance to school of epileptic and crippled children.[1] Another Act which attracted more attention empowered the English education authorities to provide meals for children attending the schools. If it were proved that their under-nourishment was due to their parents' poverty, the meals might be given at the cost of the school.[2] In 1907 an important measure of administrative reorganization was passed,[3] an Act, observed the annual report of the Board, which, 'though it attracted but little public attention, may without exaggeration be described as an event of the first educational importance'.[4] It gave the local educational authorities extended facilities for raising loans and purchasing land. It proceeded to impose upon them the obligation of arranging for the medical inspection of the children, authorized them to set up holiday schools and play centres, and for the first time gave them unrestricted powers to make whatever provision was necessary for the education of deaf, deaf and dumb, and blind children.[5] In 1908 a novel experiment was undertaken, a first step towards a compulsory post-elementary education such as had lately been introduced in Germany. A Statute authorized the local Scottish authorities—the measure was temporarily confined to Scotland—to enact for their respective districts by-laws making attendance at school obligatory up to an age not exceeding seventeen.[6] What results would these statutes

[1] 6 Edw. 7, Cap. 10: An Act to provide for the Education and Conveyance to School of Epileptic and Crippled and Defective Children. (*Education of Defective Children* [*Scotland*] *Act*, 1906.)

[2] 6 Edw. 7, Cap. 57: An Act to make provision for Meals for Children attending Public Elementary Schools in England and Wales. (*Education* [*Provision of Meals*] *Act*, 1906.)

[3] 7 Edw. 7, Cap. 43: An Act to make provision for the better administration by the Central and Local Authorities in England and Wales of the enactments relating to Education. (*Education* [*Administrative Provisions*] *Act*, 1907.)

[4] *Report of the Board of Education for the Year 1906–7*, 1907, p. 8.

[5] Before a special school for blind or deaf and dumb children could be sanctioned the Statute of 1893—56 and 57 Vict., Cap. 42: (*Elementary Education* [*Blind and Deaf Children*] *Act*, 1893) required that at least a third of the cost should be provided by private subscription. The stipulation was abolished in 1907.

[6] 8 Edw. 7, Cap. 63: An Act to amend the laws relating to England and Scotland and for other purposes connected therewith (*Education* [*Scotland*] *Act*, 1908). For the problem of post-elementary education which the Education Bill of 1919 finally attempted without success to render compulsory in England see my article on '*La Nouvelle loi Scolaire anglaise*' (*Revue de Paris*, October 1, 1919; *26th année*, vol. v, pp. 596 sqq.). To complete this account of the educational legislation during the years following 1907 we must also mention 8 Edw. 7, Cap. 67: An Act to consolidate and amend the Law relating to the Protection of Children, and Young Persons, Reformatory and Industrial Schools, and Juvenile Offenders and otherwise to amend the Law with respect to Children and Young Persons (*Children Act*, 1908): Part IV, Reformatory and Industrial Schools. 9 Edw. 7, Cap. 13: An Act to provide for the recovery by Local Education Authorities of Costs for Medical Treatment of Children attending Elementary Schools in England and Wales (*Local Education Authori-*

produce? And in so far as they were permissive what employment would the local authorities make of them? In any case, the Liberal Government had opened up the way.

9

The provision of education for those above the age for leaving school has taken us beyond the boundary of elementary education. This is equally true of the so-called higher elementary education which the Code of 1905 empowered the local authorities to provide and of which the central schools founded in London and Manchester would present excellent models.[1] It is true also of the permission given to the local authorities by the administrative Statute of 1907 to provide scholarships for pupils of public elementary schools 'from the age of twelve up to the limit of age fixed for the provision of instruction in a public elementary school by sub-section 2 of section 22 of the 1902 Act'. But although in these three instances the standard of elementary education, as hitherto understood by the public, was outstepped, the education these various provisions envisaged was nevertheless treated by the Government as something which came within the competence of the officials in charge of elementary education, not of those concerned with secondary. In other words, their authors consistently regarded the distinction between elementary and secondary education as one not of age but of class. There was an elementary education which you might carry as far as possible, but which remained throughout a preparation for manual labour. And there was a secondary education begun as soon as possible by the children of the middle-class which prepared them for all those professions which were the reserve of the ruling class. Would the Liberal Government continue to maintain this point of view? Suddenly they made it known that they would not, but intended to develop the principle contained in germ, though only in germ, in the Educa-

ties [*Medical Treatment*] *Act*, 1909). 10 Edw. 7 and 1 Geo. 5, Cap. 37: An Act to enable certain Local Education Authorities to give boys and girls information, advice and assistance with respect to the choice of employment (*Education* [*Choice of Employment*] *Act*, 1910).

[1] For the foundation and first beginnings of these schools see the excellent article entitled 'Central Schools. A London and Manchester Experiment' in the first number of *The Times Educational Supplement*, September 6, 1910, p. 5.

tion Act of 1902—by making secondary education democratic.

The report of the Board of Education published at the end of 1906, after announcing that the sum provided in the budget for the development of secondary education had been increased and that the Government was engaged in framing the necessary regulations for its allocation, explained the principle on which it would proceed. 'Education is one. . . . It ought to be continuously progressive from the time when a child first passes beyond the home and goes to school up to the time when school life ceases, when the boy or girl ceases to be under educational tutelage, has been taught how to learn for himself or herself. In an ideal commonwealth, this process would be complete for the whole youth of the nation. This is a high ideal, and how far removed it is from existing facts, or from any state of facts which can be contemplated, as soon to be possible, is at once obvious. But short of it there is no finality: and the higher the aim is fixed, the higher the attainment is likely to be.'[1]

There was no intention of complying with the demand of the youthful Labour party and making secondary education free straightaway. For that the time was clearly not ripe. Only four years had passed since the Act of 1902 had made it possible to organize in Great Britain a system of public secondary education, and only two since the Board of Education had created a body of inspectors to control the standard of education given in those secondary schools which sought Government grants. But in 1907 the budgetary provision for secondary education was further increased and the regulations distinguished between two categories of secondary school which would receive respectively a higher or a lower grant. To receive the higher, five pounds a year for every pupil, two conditions which we have already mentioned must be fulfilled: the board of managers must contain a majority of representatives of the local authority, and no religious test must be imposed on teachers or pupils. But a further condition was imposed—subject to certain exceptions laid down by the regulation —that at least a quarter of the places should be free, reserved for pupils from elementary schools who passed the examination for a scholarship.[2] And those schools in which the proportion of scholar-

[1] *Report of the Board of Education for the Year 1905–6*, 1906, p. 61.

[2] H. of C., May 15, 1907, R. MacKenna's speech (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxiv, p. 1054).

ships might be less than a quarter of the places were exceedingly few. In a much larger number of schools it was higher, sometimes 30 or 40 per cent or even more.[1] On this point however the figures are not easy to interpret. Even before 1902 the county and borough councils had begun to grant scholarships more liberally. After as before 1902 we must take into account, besides the children in receipt of these scholarships, those who received scholarships from private foundations; and in addition to those who came up from the elementary schools with a scholarship, there were children who came up without one. But the extent of the effort made by the public authorities to provide a bridge between the elementary and the secondary school will be evident when we reflect that in 1900 scholarships at a total cost of £80,000 were granted to some 5,500 children, in 1911 to 38,000 at a cost of more than £400,000.[2]

The new system involved its special problems. Should the standard of the entrance examination qualifying a boy or girl for a scholarship be so high that only exceptionally gifted children went on to the secondary school, children whose abilities merited a place among their wealthier companions? In that case, the proportion of a quarter would be out of the question and the object in view, to open secondary education to the lower classes, would not be achieved. Or should it merely ensure that the standard of the children in receipt of free places should not be lower than that of the paying pupils? The proportion of a quarter would be speedily and enormously exceeded. And would this host of newcomers prove industrious and keen workers? Or would they drop out at various stages, whatever undertakings might have been given, before the five years' course of study was completed? And even before they proved laggards would not their presence pro-

[1] 'To insist all at once upon so large a proportion as 25 per cent "free places", *ex-hypothesi* boys and girls from working-class parents . . . is under present conditions "a large order," especially when, owing to a peculiar administrative interpretation by the Board of its own regulation, the number at a given moment in a new and rapidly growing school might be nearer 40 per cent and actually does in many schools reach 30 per cent (*Times Educational Supplement*, September 6, 1910; 'The New Secondary Education. Some Dangers Ahead'). In the year 1908–9, in the seven schools for which the Durham County Council was the responsible authority, the percentage required by the Board was 25 in each case but the percentage actually given in the case of one school was 67 in 1907–8 and 39 in 1909–10; in another 46 in 1909–10 and 45 in 1910–11; and in a third 51 in 1910–11 (*Report of the Board of Education for the Year 1909-10*, 1911, p. 70).

[2] Of which it is true, as a critic points out, more than half were provided by the London County Council and more than half the remainder by a small number of large towns (S. J. G. Hoare, *The Schools and Social Reform*, 1914, p. 33). It was indeed the London County Council which inaugurated this lavish distribution of scholarships, a policy due surely to the influence of Sidney Webb.

voke an exodus of the paying pupils? Would not the intellectual as well as the social standard of these secondary schools be lowered in consequence? These were difficult problems. But their difficulty did not daunt either the Liberal Ministers or the experts at the Board of Education.[1] To connect elementary with secondary education was the outstanding achievement of the Government during these years. But we must not forget that they made use of the instrument which, when they drew up the Act of 1902, the Conservatives intentionally or unintentionally had placed in their hands.

10

But if secondary education were brought within the reach of the working class would education have been rendered completely democratic? When a child of middle-class parentage had finished his secondary education about the age of seventeen his parents did not usually regard his education as complete, but sent him to the University for three or four years. Must this higher education remain permanently the privilege of the middle- and upper-class minority? Could nothing be done to bring its benefits within reach of the proletariat? Two experiments had been made in this direction without any assistance from the State during the years immediately preceding the advent of the Liberals to power.

The first of these was the foundation at Oxford of Ruskin College.[2] An American philanthropist provided the original funds in 1899. His intention was to found at Oxford, but this time for the benefit of the working class, an institution similar to the halls which had grown up round the new universities of London and Manchester to make it possible for poor students to live more cheaply because they lived together and assisted each other in their studies. Ruskin College was therefore called at first Ruskin Hall. But it was also a 'college', because the 'Ruskin' students, prevented by mixed feelings of pride and shyness from attending the University and College lectures, were determined to have their own

[1] For these educational and social problems and others not discussed here connected with the provision of secondary education, see the excellent *Report of the Board of Education or the Year 1906–1907*, pp. 8 sqq.

[2] For Ruskin College see Henry Sanderson Furniss (Lord Sanderson), *Memories of Sixty Years*, 1931, pp. 82 sqq.; also an interesting article entitled 'A College for Workmen' in he *Speaker* for February 24, 1906.

teachers to teach them political science, political economy, and economic history. There were between thirty and fifty students, closely packed in an unpretentious building, doing their own housekeeping and, at first, their own cooking. Endless discussions conducted in an atmosphere thick with the smoke of pipes followed each lecture. There was one long term lasting forty-eight weeks, the only vacation being four weeks at Christmas, though the students were allowed to devote the week-ends to Labour propaganda in any locality they might choose. Correspondence courses which reached some 6,000 workmen throughout the country enabled the governing body of the college not only to bring its influence to bear upon a host of very young men for whom there was no room within its walls—many of them indeed too young for admission—but also to discover among this large body the *élite* who later on would be chosen as actual students.

This governing body was composed in part of members of the University of Socialist sympathies, such as Professor York Powell, Sidney Ball, and the Rev. A. J. Carlyle, in part of trade-union secretaries such as Barnes and Bowerman, whose task it was to see that the new institution was not, like the University Extension Movement, annexed by the middle class. If, however, the Principal, Dennis Hird, an eccentric ex-clergyman who had been deprived of his living for writing a book in praise of polygamy, claimed to teach the complete Socialist creed, many of the tutors thought it their duty to inculcate in their simple audience a salutary scepticism and weaken their faith in revolutionary dogma. This produced considerable friction. But the predominant influence was that of the trade-union officials, who were neither Marxian nor anti-Marxian, but, dispensing with theories of any kind, were content to defend the corporate interests of their class. It was they who provided the greater part of the funds, not only the annual payment of £52 to every student for his support but whatever further sum was required to meet the expenses of the college. And they sent up to Oxford young men of twenty-eight to thirty who for five or six years had proved themselves good workers in the cause of the unions, to learn English purer than their local dialect and the phraseology of politics and political economy so that when they went back to their unions they would be able to furnish the working class in the urban and county councils, and eventually in the House of

Commons itself, with all the leaders it required, so that it could dispense entirely with middle-class interference.

The second experiment was the foundation of the Workers' Educational Association.[1] Like Ruskin College, the movement was intended by its founder, Albert Mansbridge, a Lancashire co-operator, to renew the attempt made thirty years earlier by the University Extension Movement, which had in a sense been too successful, since its very success had made it turn its back on its proletarian origins and become a purely middle-class institution. He sought to inaugurate on novel lines a movement for the higher education of the working class by effecting an alliance between the University Extension Movement, on the one hand, and the co-operators and the trade unions on the other. The project, brought for the first time in 1899 without much success before the University Extension Summer School, was revived in 1902 immediately after the Boer War. At the end of 1905 the Association possessed 'branches' in eight towns and 'district committees' throughout the north-west and south-west of England. And in November, a few days before the resignation of the Cabinet, Sir William Anson, President of the Board of Education, with Sir Robert Morant at his side, received a working-class deputation introduced by Will Crooks which asked for financial help from the Board. For the moment nothing was done; the matter was simply referred for examination to the Advisory Committee. But when the Workers' Education Conference held its annual meeting at Oxford on August 10, 1907, Morant attended.

The subject of discussion was 'What Oxford can do for the people'. A young Scotch workman from the Clyde dockyards, S. R. Mactavish, voiced, in language almost threatening, the attitude of the working class: 'I have not come here as a suppliant. . . . I refuse to sit down at the rich man's door and beg for crusts. . . . I demand for my class all the advantages that Oxford has it in her power to offer, and I claim it as a right of which we have been unjustly deprived—unjustly for us and for Oxford too. . . . For, remember, democracy will be achieved with or without the assis-

[1] For the Workers' Educational Association and the Tutorial Classes, see Albert Mansbridge, *An Adventure in Working Class Education: Being the Story of the W.E.A. 1903–1915*, 1915; also *University Tutorial Classes: A Study in the Development of Higher Education among Working Men and Women*, 1913. The Workers' Educational Association is mentioned in the *Report of the Board of Education for the year 1906–7*, p. 91; and the Tutorial Classes in the report for the year 1910–11, p. 79.

tance of Oxford; but if the University of Oxford continues to hold herself aloof from the working classes, then we shall end by thinking of her, not for what she is, but for what she has been.' And he found fault with the too conservative spirit in which the University Extension taught political economy and history.

'In point of fact,' he declared in conclusion, 'workmen's sons come to Oxford to escape their class, not to relieve it. . . . We want her in future to inspire them, not with the desire of succeeding, but with that of serving society—we have need of you. But you have need of us.'

Such language alarmed a portion of his audience, but only a minority. The real enemies of the new organization were the extremists, ill-pleased to see among its officers not only such extremely moderate trade-unionists as Henderson and Bowerman but politicians of every party and Anglican clergyman and bishops. Ruskin College also took umbrage at these new schemes, whose very existence seemed to imply that it had failed to fulfil its founders' hopes. Dennis Hird, supported by all his students, raised the entire college in arms against the moderate policy of the governing body. Indirectly, the revolt was aimed at the youthful Workers' Educational Association.

But after a two years' struggle Hird was driven from Ruskin College and obliged to found in London a rival college supported by the subscriptions of a few trade unions more revolutionary than the rest. Meanwhile, the Workers' Educational Association carried out its programme, whose details had been settled by a committee of fourteen, of whom seven represented the universities, seven the working class. Tutorial classes were organized and regular weekly lectures given in all centres where they were asked for. The complete course lasted two years. Every year twenty-four lectures were given. An hour's lecture was followed by an hour's open discussion. In the interval between the lectures the tutor was at the students' disposition to give them advice and correct their essays. Subsidized by grants from trade unions and co-operative societies, the universities, the local authorities, and the Board of Education, and staffed by young and enthusiastic tutors, sufficiently well paid to be able to devote themselves entirely to the work, the new educational movement prospered.[1]

[1] 'The Oxford Committee held that a tutor could undertake five classes, and decided to pay £80 per class or £400 per annum for full work. Cambridge pays £72 a class and

The students learnt much from their tutors, but the tutors learned little less from their pupils. For both alike—the Tutorial Classes, like Ruskin College but on a far larger scale—were schools in which they were preparing themselves to become the future leaders of the Labour party.

II

Thus, the most important measures adopted by the Liberal Government in the sphere of public education—the provision of free meals to poor children in elementary schools, the steps taken to render secondary education democratic and higher education accessible to the working class—were all directly borrowed from the programme of the Labour party. It would be incorrect to say that this new party won an important success at the election of January 1906, for that election gave it birth. Hitherto, there had been no Labour party, but merely a Labour Representation Committee, whose stalwarts asked themselves, not without anxiety, what the result of the appeal to the nation would be. They were still a tiny group, very unimportant in comparison with the two powerful party organizations, the Liberal and the Unionist. A small room in the flat occupied by Ramsay MacDonald and his family on the second floor of a house in Lincoln's Inn Fields; a table; two or three chairs; if a fourth or fifth visitor turned up, he was given a seat on the piles of newspapers and magazines which littered the floor—this was the headquarters of the future Labour party. The three victories at Clitheroe, Woolwich, and Barnard Castle[1] had for the moment inspired the members of the Committee with unbounded hope, and the Liberals on their side, impressed by these unexpected successes, had in many constituencies made haste to conclude alliances with the Labour group. When the election campaign opened, in twenty-one one-member constituencies the Liberal had retired in favour of the Labour

London £60. Other Universities have hitherto paid less' (A. Mansbridge, *University Tutorial Classes*, p. 116). 'In 1905 the Workers' Educational Association counted eight branches, a hundred affiliated organizations and 1,000 individual members, in 1914 179 branches, 2,555 affiliated organizations, 11,430 individual members. The Tutorial Classes began in the school year 1908–9 with 234 students attending eight classes. . . . In 1913–14 there were 3,234 students attending 145 classes' (A. Mansbridge, *An Adventure* . . . pp. 67–8). For the grants from the Board of Education see A. Mansbridge, *University Tutorial Classes*, Appendix II, p. 136, also the *Board of Education Regulations for Further Education*, an annual publication which began in 1907–8

[1] See vol. v, pp. 278–9, 363.

candidate, and in ten two-member constituencies the Labour candidate shared the same platform with the Liberal. Later, however, the question of tariff reform had seemed to relegate Labour questions to the background. A considerable number of by-elections were held between the Barnard Castle election and the General Election and only one working-class candidate was returned, a miner named Richards in Monmouthshire, and he stood as a Liberal. Two Labour candidates, on the other hand, who stood in opposition to the Liberal and Protectionist candidates at Norwich and in Lancashire, found themselves at the bottom of the poll and did not even prevent the election of the Liberal. In consequence, the Liberals became less tractable, negotiations between the old party and the new group more difficult.[1] In January 1906 there was a considerable number of three-cornered contests. The total number of candidates supported by the Labour Representation Committee was fifty-one[2]—that is to say, the Committee made itself responsible for a quarter of their election expenses and undertook, if they were elected, to provide an annual salary of £200 a year while they remained in Parliament. What would be the result at the Election of this friction between the Liberals and Labour men? Would it prove damaging to either or to both?

In the event the Government majority was so overwhelming that neither suffered. In two Lanarkshire constituencies, at Wigan in Lancashire, at Stockton-on-Tees, and at Grimsby a split vote between the Liberals and Labour resulted in the election of the Unionist candidate. But almost everywhere the Liberal or the Labour candidate was returned.[3] Of the 51 candidates put up by the Labour Representation Committee 29 were elected and immediately formed themselves at Westminster into a special group which called itself 'the Labour party' and to show its entire independence of the Government sat on the opposition benches. Parliamentary statisticians, however, did not regard these 29 as

[1] For the negotiations conducted in the autumn of 1905 through the channel of George Cadbury, the great Quaker chocolate-manufacturer, see A. G. Gardiner, *Life of George Cadbury*, p. 81.

[2] Besides eighteen candidates representing the miners and seven candidates put forward by the Social Democratic Federation. For a complete account of the working-class candidates, see J. Keir Hardie, 'Labour and the forthcoming Election' (*Nineteenth Century*, January 1906; vol. lix, p. 12 sqq.).

[3] For a good analysis of the election results see Keir Hardie, 'The Labour Party' (*National Review*, February 1906; vol. xlvi, pp. 1002 sqq.).

the only Labour members in the new House. Some even reckoned 54, among them 14 miners who had their separate electoral organization and persisted in forming a group apart. Of these 54, 45 were of working-class origin.[1] If among the members of the Independent Labour party Ramsay MacDonald had been a pupil teacher, Snowden a clerk in the civil service, and Jowett was an employer, this does not alter the fact that the victory of Labour at the polls was the victory of a class rather than a party. At first sight these 50 working men seemed an unimportant group in comparison with the 200 Nonconformist members. But if at Westminster these Nonconformists were a formidable body of representatives, they represented only the 'sects', swamped in the twentieth century by a vaster and more powerful electorate. The 50 working-class members, on the other hand, could regard themselves with good reason as the genuine representatives of the enormous majority of the voters. If the Cabinet proved too obedient to the orders of the representatives of Nonconformity, it ran the risk of alienating the sympathies of the electorate. On the other hand, not only the Liberal members of Parliament but all the members without exception, even the Conservatives, were aware after January 1906 that, if they refused to take the grievances voiced by the Labour members seriously, they might lose their voters *en masse* to Labour. 'We have here', wrote Balfour on January 17, 1906, to the King's private secretary, 'to do with something much more important than the swing of the pendulum or all the squabbles about Free Trade and Fiscal Reform. We are face to face (no doubt in a milder form) with the Socialistic difficulties which loom so large on the Continent. Unless I am greatly mistaken, the Election of 1906 inaugurates a new era.'[2] Balfour no doubt was not sorry to make this observation, for it was the Liberals who would be the first to suffer from the birth of the Labour party. It was none the less true, as also was the parenthesis about the 'mild' character of English Socialism. For if in the whole

[1] Thirty members who refused to join the Labour party (in fact, they complained bitterly that the Labour party had stolen their title, for a Labour Group had existed in the previous Parliament) constituted a Trade Union Labour Group within the ranks of the Liberal party (G. M. Alcock, *Fifty Years of Trade Unionism*, p. 365). But the group lost much of its importance when the fourteen miners left it for the Labour party and it soon disappeared.

[2] Arthur Balfour to Lord Knollys, January 17, 1906 (Sir Sidney Lee, *King Edward VII* . . . vol. ii, p. 449). Cf. Arthur Balfour to Lord Saint-Aldwyn, January 26, 1906 (Lady Victoria Hicks-Beach, *Life of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach* (*Earl Saint-Aldwyn*) 1932; vol. ii, p. 224).

of Europe there was no Socialist party which was so completely representative of a class, in spite of this (or was it because of this?), there was not one so undoctrinal. It was a significant fact that the few 'Socialist' candidates who had come forward in one or two constituencies, whether Social Democrats of Hyndman's group or independent Socialists, had been defeated without exception. At Burnley, Hyndman had not even the satisfaction of preventing the election of the Labour candidate. The new Labour members, men who owed their political education to long years of trade-union negotiation, flattered by their membership of the first Parliament in the world and the courteous reception they received, felt almost overawed as they listened to the discussion of questions of general policy which transcended their professional competence.[1] They were guiltless of any desire to identify the interests of their class with those of the human race, or achieve their aims at the cost of overthrowing the entire fabric of society; they were devout Christians and moderate patriots. What then were their demands? In the first place they demanded that the wrong inflicted upon the trade unions by the hostile judgment in 1901 of the House of Lords should be righted, and that since the supreme court of appeal had decided to interpret the statutes of 1871 and 1875 dealing with the unions in a sense opposed to the plain intention of their authors they insisted that these statutes should be recast in such terms that the judges' ill-will should never again be able to nullify the intention of the legislature.

12

As we have already seen, the Unionist Government, anxious lest the discontent aroused among the working classes by the

[1] Winston Churchill (speech at Hartlepool, May 12, 1906) mentions as one of the distinctive features of the new Parliament 'the strength and influence of the Labour party'. He continues: 'The interests of the country were greatly advantaged by the increase in the number of Labour representatives. They were a stable and not an unstable element and added greatly to the wisdom and the earnestness and consequently to the dignity of the House.' Cf. Sir Almeric Fitzroy, August 14, 1907: 'Haldane's and Grey's comments upon the relations of Ministers to their large and heterogeneous following were full of interest. They were both agreed that the Labour Members gave them much less trouble than gentlemen in close political connection—a fact which they were inclined to ascribe to the circumstance that most of the Labour party had through their Trade Unions become men of affairs, capable of apprehending any practical issue submitted to them. Haldane declared that, in relation to military administration, he had found individual Labour members most ready to listen to reason and accept explanations offered in a reasonable spirit, and Sir E. Grey instanced Mackarness, Colton, and Bellairs as types of an opposite tendency' (*Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 329–30).

judgment of the House of Lords might have disastrous consequences at the polls, appointed a Royal Commission of five members to inquire into the question of trade disputes and combinations.[1] It would have reported in the autumn of 1905, on the eve of the General Election, if the Cabinet had not objected to the report being used as a source of political capital by the candidates of all parties.[2] It was not therefore published until January 15 under another Cabinet when the rout of the Unionists had already begun. In substance the report proposed that three points which the late judgments had rendered doubtful should be determined by fresh legislation. These decisions had restricted the right of picketing—that is to say, the right of strikers to make the strike effective by making it complete. The Commission proposed that it should be expressly declared lawful 'to persuade to strike—i.e. to desist from working, apart from procuring breach of contract'. It further proposed to delete from the statute of 1875 the too indefinite offence of watching and besetting a house and to substitute for it a prohibition 'of acts in such a manner as to cause a reasonable apprehension in the mind of any person that violence will be used to him or his family, or damage be done to his property'. In the second place, to restrict the right to strike, the judges had taken advantages of an omission in the statute of 1875. The statute had laid down that an act committed in the course of a strike by several persons should not be deemed an act of criminal conspiracy, if it would not constitute a crime, when committed by a single individual. But it had not laid down that they were not liable to a civil action, and civil proceedings had actually been taken. The Commission proposed that they should be expressly barred. Finally, these limitations upon the right to strike had been rendered a very serious menace to the trade unions by the celebrated Taff Vale Decision which held the unions liable to damages for offences committed by their members in the course of a strike. Until 1901 the judges had interpreted the intentional silence on this point of the Act of 1871 as implying non-liability. Now that the courts had adopted the contrary view what steps should be

[1] *A Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the subject of Trade Disputes and Trade Combinations and as to the law affecting them, and to report on the law applicable to the same and the effect of any modification thereof*, June 6, 1903. *Report of the Royal Commission on Trade Disputes and Trade Combinations*, January 15, 1906.

[2] Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism* (revised edition extended to 1920), 1920, p. 605.

taken? It was one thing not to declare the trade unions liable, quite another to lay down positively that they were not, even when the acts adjudged illegal by the courts had been committed by their express orders. The Commission recoiled from such an enormity and suggested a device which betrayed the systematic and elaborate workmanship of the Webbs. It proposed to legalize unions and strikes, and give the legal union a constitution which would protect it from responsibility for its members' acts if unauthorized and immediately disavowed. It further proposed that the unions should be permitted to separate their benefit fund from the rest of their funds so that it could no longer be confiscated during a strike, and become, if they wished, 'corporations' capable of concluding legal agreements with the employers and their own members. It was proposed, in short, not to abolish the liability of the unions, but to restrict it by defining it, and thus take the first steps towards remodelling their entire status.[1]

When on March 28 the Attorney-General, Sir John Walton, expounded in the House of Commons the principles of the Government's Bill, they were obviously identical with those on which the commission had based its report. In the first place the Bill, reviving the phraseology of a statute of 1859,[2] inadvertently repealed by the Act of 1871, declared 'peaceful persuasion' during a strike lawful. It extended to civil proceedings the protection against criminal given by the statute of 1875. Finally, it dealt with the vital question of the unions' financial liability by imposing upon them the obligation to form 'executive committees'. Acts committed by these committees themselves or by their regular agents acting within their instructions would alone render the union liable for damages. To this solution only one alternative was possible, the total abolition of liability. In an impassioned peroration the Attorney-General pointed out the dangers of the

[1] According to S. and B. Webb the Commission 'reported in favour of the Trade Union accepting full responsibility for its own action, subject to considerable, *but far from adequate*, amendment of the Law' (*The History of Trade Unionism*, revised edition, 1920, p. 600). But in spite of the fact that apparently he did not regard these amendments as 'adequate' Sidney Webb was one of the three members to sign the majority report. In a short note appended to the report he pointed out that he desired to go further and contemplated a system of trade unionism which would render strikes impossible (*Report of the Royal Commission on Trade Disputes and Trade Combinations*, p. 18). For the views of Professor William Ashley, closely akin to Webb's, see his article entitled 'Trade Unions and the Law' (*National Review*, January 1906; vol. xlvii, pp. 56 sqq.).

[2] 22 Vict., Cap. 34: An Act to amend and explain an Act of the sixth year of the reign of George the Fourth to repeal the Laws relating to the Combination of Workmen and to make other provisions in lieu thereof. (*Combination of Workmen Act*, 1859.)

latter course. It was anti-democratic because it placed the trade union in a privileged position at law. And it would expose the unions to the risk of being committed by their most irresponsible agents to actions they disapproved.[1]

But the champions of the proletariat were up in arms at once. They could not forget that in 1905 a Unionist House of Commons had voted by a very large majority in favour of the complete abolition of liability; that during the Election campaign it had been made clear at every public meeting at which the question was raised that the workers demanded nothing less, and that many candidates, beginning with Sir John Walton himself, had pledged themselves, if returned, to secure the unions against liability under any circumstances. Sir John had in fact contrived to introduce into his peroration language which seemed intended to cover a retreat. It was for Parliament, he had pointed out, to decide whether it approved the solution proposed by the Government or preferred another. And he had refused to determine beforehand the form the Bill would finally assume. The Labour speakers therefore did not oppose the first reading of the Bill on the understanding that the Government would not oppose its future amendment in accordance with their wishes. They were aware of the voting power at their back and knew that all the members of the House were equally aware of it. 'It was a more serious question than simply a question of party politics, inasmuch as it was a question which affected the great mass of the workers in the country.'[2]

Two days later the House of Commons was invited to discuss the second reading of a Labour Bill dealing with the same question and which, while agreeing with the Government's Bill on the first two points, proceeded to lay down that a trade union could never be made liable for damages on account of illegal acts committed by its members.[3] An extremely heated debate was in progress when the Prime Minister intervened. He asked permission to speak the language not of law (he was no lawyer) but of common sense. The solution put forward by the Labour Bill possessed, he admitted, the advantage as compared with that proposed by the Government two days before that, if adopted, it gave less scope for litigation. After all, it simply restored the condition of affairs

[1] H. of C., March 28, 1906 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cliv, pp. 1295 sqq.).
[2] H. of C., March 28, 1906, Shackleton's speech (ibid., vol. cliv, p. 1316).
[3] H. of C., March 30, 1906: Hudson's Motion (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clv, pp. 21 sqq.).

which had existed for the last thirty years of the nineteenth century and which had favoured the growth, on the whole beneficial, of the trade unions. Twice already, in 1904 and in 1905, he had voted for it himself. Why then should he reject it now that he was Prime Minister? He asked the House of Commons to pass the second reading of the Bill. Its principle would then be embodied in the Government's Bill.[1] This course was adopted. When the Government measure came up once more for discussion, it was no longer in charge of the Attorney-General but of the Solicitor-General, Sir William Robson. He left the question of the absolute non-liability of the unions to the free vote of the House, admitting that the Government could not maintain the original form of the Bill 'without considering or consulting the opinions of the trade unions'.[2] The debate which followed in July, August, and November was rapid. The opponents of the Bill, thus altered to satisfy the demands of labour, never amounted to a hundred, only once exceeded fifty, and on one occasion, and moreover when the decisive issue of liability or non-liability was put to the vote, were no more than twenty. The champions of the privileges of labour even won a further victory. Sir Charles Dilke, with the assent of the Government, carried an amendment that no judicial proceedings could be taken even if a strike involved a breach of contract.[3] Balfour delighted to humiliate the Cabinet by pointing to its disgraceful retreat on March 30.[4] But if the legal members of the Cabinet had indeed been compelled to retreat—among them it was said Asquith and Haldane—Campbell-Bannerman had asserted his authority and his personal prestige emerged enhanced from the debates. And had not Balfour himself retreated along with the rest? When the Bill came up for the third reading he refused on behalf of his party to challenge a division. He had always, he said, believed that the existing law required amending, so as to safeguard the benefit funds of the

[1] H. of C., March 30, 1906 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clv, pp. 51 sqq.).

[2] H. of C., April 24, 1906 (ibid., vol. clv, pp. 1482 sqq.).

[3] Clause 3 of the measure lays down that 'an act done by a person in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute shall not be actionable on the ground only [that it induces some other person to break a contract of employment or] that it is an interference with the trade, business or employment of some other person, or with the right of some other person to dispose of his capital or his labour as he will'. The words placed in brackets were added on the motion of Sir Charles Dilke, H. of C., August 3, 1906 (ibid., vol. clxii, p. 1678). For the serious legal consequences of this amendment see M. W. Geldart 'The Present Law of Trade Disputes and Trade Unions' (*Political Quarterly*, May 1914, p. 33).

[4] H. of C., April 24, 1906 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clv, pp. 1527–8, 1535–6).

trade unions. He would not make himself responsible for imperilling those funds by voting against the Bill.[1] The House of Lords could not oppose the unanimous decision of the Lower House. At the opening of December, at the very moment when under his leadership the Lords were engaged in garrotting the Education Bill, Lord Lansdowne pointed out that the country had spoken, that if they sent back the Trade Disputes Bill, it would be returned to them in a more embittered spirit, and therefore that the only possible course was to pass it.[2] Thereupon this important measure,[3] a scandal to the lawyers, was passed without division or debate less than a year after the Liberals had come into power. Its enactment was a victory not of the Liberals over the Conservatives, but of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie.

13

The working class put forward at the beginning of 1906 a further claim. This time they did not demand that the policy followed by the Unionist Government should be reversed, but that a policy which in their opinion had been pursued too timidly

[1] H. of C., November 9, 1906 (ibid., vol. clxiv, pp. 906, sqq., esp. p. 909).

[2] H. of L., December 4, 1906 (ibid., vol. clxvi, p. 702).

[3] 6 Edw. 7, Cap. 47: An Act to provide for the regulation of Trade Unions and Trade Disputes (*Trade Disputes Act*, 1906). It would be interesting to know how it was administered. It appears to have applied most strictly. The judges, and not only Tories like Darling, but such an advanced Liberal as the Chancellor, Lord Loreburn, were content with lamentations and protests when called upon to apply it. See a list of their protests in a letter over the signature of C. Arthur Buckley in the *Spectator* for February 17, 1912. As the years went on, the Courts became increasingly favourable to the contentions of the unions. At first they refused to grant immunity to illegal Acts not expressly specified in the Statute of 1906 (Conway v. Wade, 1908; Lark v. Belfast Harbour Commissioners, 1908). But in 1913 in Vacher & Sons v. The London Society of Compositors, the House of Lords refused to condemn the Compositors' Union for defamation, though the defamation was not in connection with a labour dispute. It regarded the defamation as itself constituting such a dispute (S. and B. Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, revised edition, 1920, p. 606). If, however, the employers were thus disarmed by the Courts, they took their revenge in other ways by making use of the police during a strike, especially when the military replaced the ordinary police force. General Macready relates how, when called upon to keep order during a strike in South Wales at the end of 1910, he decided on his responsibility that the strike pickets must not exceed six persons, that they should not be permitted to light fires to keep themselves warm within a given radius of an inhabited building, that their members must be distinguishable by white bands on the arm, and might only exercise their right of peaceful persuasion under police supervision, as otherwise the police would be unable to determine whether the persuasion was genuinely peaceful (General the Right Hon. Sir Nevil Macready, *Annals of an Active Life*, vol. i, pp. 147–8). For the restrictions to which the right of picketing remained subject, see also C. Watney and J. A. Little, *Industrial Warfare, The Aims and Claims of Capital and Labour*, 1912, pp. 307–8.

should be carried further. We have seen how in 1897 the Unionist Government passed a Workmen's Compensation Bill which the unions regarded as a victory. And the extension of its benefits in 1900 to the agricultural labourers had been a second success.[1] But they were not satisfied. They demanded more,[2] and the Government, to prove that it had no objection in principle to their claims, appointed in 1904 a committee of inquiry. The latter, however, was perhaps obeying the unavowed wishes of the Cabinet when it reported adversely on almost every point.[3] Render the application of the statute universal? It was out of the question. It would involve the absurdity that if a private person paid a passer-by to sweep the snow from his doorstep, he would be deemed, in case of accident, a responsible employer. Moreover, what ground was there for bringing within the scope of the law occupations devoid of professional risk of any kind? It would be better to follow the German precedent, followed hitherto, and gradually extend a statute originally applicable to particular categories of workers to other categories, one at a time. Pay benefit not only from the fifteenth day as prescribed by the Act of 1897 but from the first? It would be a premium on idleness, a direct encouragement to a worker to go on the sick list and, if in addition he was in receipt of benefit from a union or friendly society, he might, thanks to the indemnity paid by his employer, receive a total sum in excess of his wages. Extend the benefit of the law to the victims of those 'industrial diseases' due in the opinion of experts to the unhealthy nature of certain occupations? A dangerous experiment, the report declared. Experts were not infallible. It was better to keep to the common-sense distinction between accident and 'disease'; and if it were desired to protect the worker against the risk of 'industrial diseases' to incorporate that risk in a general measure of insurance against sickness.

These negative conclusions were not calculated to appease the unions at a moment when they were becoming increasingly hostile to a Cabinet and party that were losing their hold over the country.

[1] See vol. v, p. 237.

[2] H. of C., May 19, 1904. Shackleton's speech. (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxxxv, p. 408.)

[3] *Home Office Departmental Committee on Workmen's Compensation: Report of the Departmental Committee appointed to inquire into the Law relating to Compensation for Injuries to Workmen*, vol. i, *Report and Appendices 1904* (*Sir Kenelm Digby's Committee*), vol. ii, *Minutes of Evidence with Index*, 1905, vol. iii, *Supplementary Index*, 1906.

The pressure of the working class compelled the Government to introduce a Bill at the opening of the session of 1905.[1] It simply extended the benefits of the Act of 1897 to several categories of employment. And on one point it restricted its application. Complaints were made that the Act had made it harder for elderly men to find work: less robust and more liable to accidents, their employment involved too much risk to the employer. The Bill proposed that workers over the age of sixty should be entitled to conclude special contracts with their employers, less costly for the latter. Moreover, the introduction of the Bill in the House of Lords seems to have been an empty gesture. Once introduced, it was dropped immediately. In September the Trade Union Congress once more protested against the Government's inertia and demanded the establishment of a system of compulsory insurance.[2] The resignation of the Unionist Cabinet followed and the Liberal victory of 1906. Labour was to receive satisfaction.

In the first place—and this was a novelty in the history of British labour legislation—the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1906,[3] a statute of consolidation and amendment, was a measure of universal application. It embraced 'any person who has entered into or works under a contract of service or apprenticeship with an employer, whether by way of manual labour, clerical work or otherwise, and whether the contract is expressed or implied, is oral or in writing'. The only categories excluded from its scope were non-manual workers whose annual remuneration exceeded

[1] H. of L., April 4, 1905, Lord Belper's motion (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxliv, pp. 263 sqq.).

[2] The measure which would be passed in 1906 did not depart from the system set up in 1897, the French as opposed to the German system which required the employer to ensure himself against the risk of compensating his employee. The system had its drawbacks and the report of Sir Kenelm Digby's committee had pointed them out. Many small employers failed to insure themselves—whether from economy or mere neglect and many workmen who were victims of accidents neglected to make use of their rights. The law often remained a dead letter, at Sheffield for example, a town of small workshops (*Report* pp. 12–13). Throughout the debates the representatives of labour continued to demand a system of compulsory insurance (see H. of C., March 26, 1906, Barnes' speech; *Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., vol. cliv, p. 902). But the Cabinet, while not refusing an inquiry, insisted on the difficulties involved and on this point the only satisfaction the champions of compulsory insurance received was the insertion in the clause dealing with occupational diseases of a provision enabling the Government by a provisional order which must be subsequently ratified by Parliament to introduce compulsory insurance in any industry where there existed a society insuring against the risk in question and containing the majority of the employers.

[3] 6 Edw. 7, Cap. 58: An Act to consolidate and amend the Law with respect to Compensation to Workmen for Injuries suffered in the course of their Employment (*Workmen's Compensation Act*, 1906).

£250, casual labourers, workers who did not work for the trade or business of their employer, those who worked in their own homes, in the language of the Act 'outworkers', and members of the employer's family. Step by step in the course of the debates several restrictions imposed by the Bill in its original form were dropped. Shop assistants were given the right to compensation. Domestic servants also, a concession proposed by Campbell-Bannerman. The statutes of 1897 and 1900 were jointly applicable to 7,250,000 workers. It was the intention of the Liberal Government to extend their benefits to a further 2,000,000. Finally, no fewer than 6,000,000 became entitled to compensation for the first time.

In the second place the Bill reduced from a fortnight to a week the period at the end of which the employee who had met with an accident began to receive compensation, a sum equal to half his wages. The Labour members asked for a further reduction to three days and, though they failed to secure it, were at least successful in obtaining that when the victim of an accident was kept from his work over a fortnight the compensation should be reckoned from the day of the accident. The Government, on the other hand, attempted in vain to re-insert into the Bill, subject to certain restrictions, the clause the Unionists had inserted in the Bill of 1905, permitting employers to conclude special contracts with workers over sixty years old. It was dropped during the debate on the Bill. Moreover the original Bill reproduced a provision of the Act of 1897 which refused compensation to a workman guilty of 'serious or wilful misconduct'. The Labour members disliked this restriction and even a worker guilty of misconduct had the right to compensation in the event of 'death or serious and permanent disablement'.[1]

Thirdly, 'industrial diseases' would give the workers the same right to compensation as accidents in the strict sense. A schedule enumerated six of these: anthrax, poisoning by lead, mercury, phosphorus, or arsenic, and ankylostomiasis.[2] The ministry was empowered to add other diseases to the list by departmental orders. And a committee was immediately appointed to inquire into the desirability of doing so. It reported in favour of adding

[1] H. of C., November 29, 1906 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxvi, pp. 367 sqq.).

[2] A disease, caused by hookworm, affecting miners (*Trs. note*).

eighteen other diseases to the six mentioned in the original schedule.[1] This was done by a departmental order on May 22, 1907.[2]

14

After 1906, so important in the history of British Labour legislation, 1907 was a barren year. Among the measures of social reform brought forward by the Cabinet the most interesting were those which attacked the monopoly of the great landlords, always odious to the masses. In his election programme of December 21, 1905, Campbell-Bannerman had pledged himself to deal with the problem. The speech from the throne which opened the new Parliament had announced an inquiry into 'the means by which a larger number of the population may be attracted to and retained on the soil', and had promised that it should be carried out without unnecessary delay. In 1907 three Bills were introduced in the Commons. The Opposition had the pleasure of pointing out that each was based on a different principle.[3] The first concerned Ireland. As we have already seen[4] its object was to settle on the land as owners farmers evicted by their landlords. Therefore, if it were passed and successfully put into operation, it would buttress private property in land. The second concerned Scotland. Its object was to extend to the Lowlands measures already adopted in the Highlands on behalf of the small tenants, the crofters. Like Gladstone's Irish Land Act of 1882 it did not confiscate property but simply limited the amount of rent payable and protected the farmer against unjustifiable eviction. The third concerned England. Its spirit was distinctly Socialistic. It obliged the County Councils, if the Board of Agriculture on inquiry deemed it necessary, to purchase land for small agricultural holdings on which to settle not independent owners but tenants of the Council.[5] The

[1] *Report of the Departmental Committee on Compensation for Industrial Diseases*, 1907. (Herbert Samuel was chairman.)

[2] A further report published in 1908 advised the inclusion of three additional industrial diseases. This was done, December 2, 1908.

[3] H. of C., August 13, 1907, Arthur Balfour's speech (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxx, pp. 1105 sqq.).

[4] See above, pp. 53–7.

[5] 7 Edw. 7, Cap. 54: An Act to amend the Law with respect to Small Holdings and Allotments (*Small Holdings and Allotments Act*, 1907). The Bill was based on the work of a committee appointed by the previous Government in April 1905 (Lord Onslow's Committee) which reported in 1906: (*Departmental Committee on Small Holdings*). *Report of the*

House of Lords threw out the Scottish Bill, but let the two others pass. The English Bill appears to have produced interesting results at least during the years which immediately followed its enactment.[1] An Act of 1908 reinforced its provisions and completed them by further provisions authorizing the local authorities to divide the land they purchased into allotments which the poor inhabitants of large towns could rent to grow vegetables.[2] These, however, were petty reforms ill adapted to arouse popular enthusiasm.

Nor was it more likely to be kindled by the Factory and Workshop Act,[3] which extended the provisions of the Factory Act of 1901 to laundries, or the Employment of Women Act,[4] which modified on two points of detail the provisions of the Factory Act of 1901 and the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1887 regulating female labour. A comprehensive statute dealing with industrial and financial companies whose object was to make illegal certain current practices which defrauded the public was more important and obviously of Socialist tendency, as indeed had been the Companies' Act of 1900, since it gave the State a larger measure of

Departmental Committee appointed by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries to inquire into and report upon the subject of Small Holdings in Great Britain; With copy of the Minutes appointing the Committee, 1906. The Committee's terms of reference were 'to inquire into the administration and working of the Small Holdings Act, 1892; to examine the various arrangements made by landowners in recent years for the provision of smaller agricultural holdings; and to report as to the condition under which such holdings are more likely to be attended with success and as to measures which may most advantageously be taken, either by legislation, co-operative association, or otherwise, to secure the increase of their number'. The preceding Statute of 1892 which was permissive and left County Councils the option of buying or leasing, selling or letting to tenants had yielded very poor results. In ten years only 652 acres had been acquired.

[1] For the execution of the Statute see from 1908 onwards the annual reports of the Board: *Board of Agriculture and Fisheries: Annual Report of Proceedings under the Small Holdings and Allotments Act, 1908: The Universities and College Estates Act; The Glebe Lands Act, 1888; The Improvement of Land Acts; The Settled Land Acts; The Agricultural Holdings Acts and certain other Acts; In the year . . .* The number of acres acquired annually by the operation of the Act rose from 21,417 acres in 1908 to 39,472 in 1909, fell to 33,335 in 1910, rose again to 36,358 in 1911. After this we note a constant fall until the war: 33,493 acres in 1912; 24,493 in 1913, 16,537 in 1914.

[2] 8 Edw. 7, Cap. 36: An Act to consolidate the enactments with respect to Small Holdings and Allotments in England and Wales (*Small Holdings and Allotments Act*, 1908).

[3] 7 Edw. 7, Cap. 39: An Act to amend the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901 with respect to Laundries and to extend that Act to certain Institutions and to provide for the inspection of certain premises (*Factory and Workshop Act, 1907*). The influence exercised by the Catholic Church in the House of Commons generally and over the Labour party in particular made itself felt during the debate, when the Catholic members obtained the exemption of convents from inspection by the Home Office.

[4] 7 Edw. 7, Cap. 10: An Act to repeal Section 57 of the Factory and Workshop Act 1901, and part of Section 7 of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887, relating to the Employment of Women and Children (*Employment of Women Act*, 1907).

control over private companies.[1] But it was a Socialism which did not directly affect the proletariat, a class from which company promoters and stockbrokers drew no shareholders or victims.

This slackening of the Government's legislative activity coincided with the appearance of a marked coolness between Liberal and Labour politicians. Important Liberals denounced the Socialist peril.[2] Labour circles took offence. The Liberal leaders with anxiety, the Unionist with hope, saw the Labour party assume a more distinctively Socialist character and constitute itself definitely a third party strictly independent of both the older parties. If the Liberals lost votes, and the tide of enthusiasm which had swept them into power must inevitably recede, the Conservatives might profit in the constituencies by this division of votes between Liberalism and Labour. Their hopes were indeed actually fulfilled in April 1906 at Cockermouth in Cumberland. The Independent candidature of the miner Smillie enabled the Unionist candidate to defeat the Liberal.

Would the same thing happen the following summer at Jarrow-on-Tyne when a Labour candidate and an Irish Nationalist came forward against the Liberal candidate, already faced by a Unionist? The result of the election took everyone by surprise. The Liberal candidate was indeed defeated, but it was by the Labour candidate, Peter Curran, who received 5,000 votes as against 4,000 given to the Conservative, only 3,500 to the Liberal and 2,000 to the Nationalist. Six weeks later at Colne Valley in the West Riding of Yorkshire when a Socialist presented himself against a Liberal and a Conservative he was returned at the head of the poll, though it was a very close contest. Both were seats which the Liberals had been accustomed to regard as safe. In the Colne Valley a Liberal had been returned unopposed in 1906. Moreover, if at Jarrow the Labour candidate had been the official candidate of the Labour party, neither at Cockermouth nor at Colne Valley was this the case. In both instances the Labour candidates—Smillie at Cockermouth, Victor Grayson at Colne Valley—were independent candidates and revolutionaries. Victor Grayson, origin-

[1] 7 Edw. 7, Cap. 50: An Act to amend the Companies' Act, 1862 to 1900 (*Companies' Act*, 1907). It reinforced a number of details and completed the provisions of the Act of 1900, thus carrying out the recommendations of a Commission appointed by the Unionist Cabinet in 1905. We must call attention to a section imposing certain conditions on foreign companies operating in Great Britain. It betrays the same inspiration as particular clauses of the Patent Act and Merchant Shipping Act.

[2] The Master of Elibank, speech at West Linton, Peeblesshire, August 25, 1906.

ally a mechanic, had studied theology with the intention of becoming a minister, but had abandoned theology (it was a sign of the times) for political economy and become a Socialist journalist. In the House of Commons the violent scenes he provoked attracted the attention of England, indeed of the whole of Europe.

It is not surprising that the popular discontent which found expression at the polls also manifested itself in the Socialist Groups. On the very morrow of its defeat in January 1906, the Social Democratic Federation resumed its revolutionary campaign, changed its name to the Social Democratic *Party* and advocated 'the fusion of all the organizations ready to work on a definite democratic basis, for the realization of Socialism'. Its membership increased rapidly and when at the opening of 1908 the founder of the Federation, Hyndman, proposed to effect this fusion by union with the Labour party—that is to say, by adopting the very policy he had himself repudiated in 1900, he was defeated by a large majority. The Labour party was led by a Henderson and a MacDonald, and the extremists of Social Democracy refused to lower the red flag. At the opposite extremity of the Socialist camp the Fabian Society was roused from its conservative tranquillity by the sudden incursion of H. G. Wells, who for two years, until he wearied of the enterprise and returned to novel-writing, attempted to transform the Society into a political group employing its election agents and putting forward candidates in as many constituencies as possible, its programme being the abolition of private capital and the destruction of family selfishness. Finally, the Independent Labour party, which was led by the same moderate men who led the Labour party, made life difficult for its leaders. It was in vain that in 1907 Ramsay MacDonald, to retain some authority over the group, used language verging on revolutionary. Grayson's election brought the disorder which prevailed in the party to a climax. It was only by resigning from the executive in April 1909 that MacDonald, Keir Hardie, and Snowden could escape responsibility for his excesses.

But the Social Democratic party proved as weak as the Federation had been. Wells' attempt was but a flash in the pan, a passing episode quickly forgotten in the history of the Fabian Society. The opposition of the Independent Labour party to the moderate policy of the Labour party was never very violent during the next few years. The Labour party strictly so called remained the faithful

mirror of the British proletariat. MacDonald soon became its official leader in the House of Commons, without therefore ceasing to be a member of the Independent Labour party. How are we to describe this Labour party? Was it Socialist or Anti-Socialist? The party itself did not know. At the annual conference held at Hull in January 1908 it rejected by an overwhelming majority a motion accepting Socialism, only to pass the very next day a motion which stated that 'the Labour party should have as a definite object the socialization of the means of production, distribution, and exchange'. At bottom it was completely indifferent to theory, concerned simply to defend the immediate interests of the working class. It was before everything else moderate and chose Henderson as its chairman instead of Keir Hardie because Hardie's sentimental utopianism did not express the party's views. It contemplated making itself a political party with a regular organization in every constituency but hesitated to take the step for fear of diminishing the authority of the Trade Union Congress. The unions, on their part, would seem to have intended at one moment to strengthen their authority by excluding, from the body of officials whose function it was to maintain permanent contact between the party and the Congress, anyone who was not himself a member of a union. They shrank however from the prospect of losing the services of such indispensable workers as MacDonald and Snowden. Nevertheless, the Labour party was fundamentally the party of the trade unions, a corporative and professional party. If we would understand the character of the working-class movement at this period we must not make too much of two or three by-elections, or two or three doctrinal disputes in the groups representing labour. We must rather fix our attention on the strikes which the unions—whose members now exceeded 2,000,000—began to call the moment the Trade Disputes Act of 1906 had restored their liberty.

On December 21 the Bill became law. A month had not gone by before a strike broke out in London which attracted the attention of the general public, not only because it occurred in the capital, but even more by its unexpected nature. It was a strike of music-hall artists which soon spread to the entire staff. The artists objected to certain conditions, in their opinion too severe, which the managers inserted in their contracts. The musicians and mechanics—in fact music-hall employees of every description—

followed suit. The great music halls of London were obliged to close. In a hall which happened to be vacant the strikers organized a monster entertainment in aid of their strike and 2,500 pickets triumphantly asserted the right of peaceful persuasion the law had just conferred upon them. The strike, during which strict discipline was maintained, and which did not interfere with the material welfare of the nation, had the sympathy of the public. The managers gave way and a 'board of conciliation' decided to ask for the services of the Board of Trade's professional arbitrator, George Askwith. When the twenty-two variety theatres concerned had re-opened, the arbitrator held twenty-two meetings, heard a hundred witnesses and finally drew up and got accepted by both parties the Music Hall Award of 1907 which, though altered several times later, constituted the first labour code for all music-hall employees. It comprised a standard form of contract and regulations for settling future disputes. It would seem that the President of the Board of Trade, Lloyd George, was tempted at first to give the intervention of his Board a more picturesque garb and had therefore offered the post of arbitrator to a personage much in the limelight in London, T. P. O'Connor, a man half Irish, half English, half politician, half journalist and man of letters. O'Connor refused.[1] But Lloyd George would soon be occupied with other arbitrations, involved in conflicts of a far more serious nature and would descend into the arena in person.

15

There was in the first place the threat in the autumn of 1907 of a general strike on the railways. It was the first occurrence of its kind and caused a sensation. Throughout the nineteenth century practically nothing had been heard of the railwaymen. The battle of the proletariat had been fought by the workers of the engineering, building, and textile trades. In 1872 the railwaymen had formed for the first time a union intended to comprise all their branches, the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. It stagnated, was soon nothing more than a friendly society, and

[1] Lord Askwith, *Industrial Problems and Disputes*, pp. 103 sqq. Lord Askwith has kindly explained at my request a passing allusion in the text.

would seem never to have had more than 10,000 members until the Socialist agitation of 1889 gave it a new lease of life, while creating on its left wing a union of unskilled workers, the General Railway Workers' Union. In 1891 it contained 30,000 members, in 1900 60,000. But it was still badly organized and the strikes which broke out among the railwaymen in the closing years of the century were partial and spasmodic, uncontrolled by the executive committee of the Union. They merely endangered its funds without benefiting the working class. One of these local strikes was responsible for the counterstroke of the Taff Vale Decision, which for several years effectively reduced to impotence the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants like the other unions. Nevertheless, even under these circumstances it accomplished useful work and under the extremely moderate leadership of Richard Bell saw that the statutes protecting labour were enforced. The General Election of 1906, by revealing to the proletariat the extent of its power, gave its activities more aggressive turn. The Union leaders devoted the year 1906 to drawing up a national programme of claims, which was published at the close of 1907 immediately after the Trade Disputes Bill had restored to the Union complete freedom to strike.

What were these claims? The railwaymen complained that their wages were too low. Thirty-eight per cent of them were paid one pound a week or less; 50 per cent between one pound and thirty shillings.[1] On the Scotch railways two-thirds of the men were paid twenty-three shillings a week or less, a third nineteen shillings a week or less.[2] The railwaymen also complained that their hours were too long—though they had already been considerably reduced by statute.[3] In one single month in 1906 the total number of hours worked on the railways amounted to 48,000 days of thirteen hours, 16,000 of fourteen, and some of the employees worked fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, even eighteen hours.[4] These long hours endangered the safety both of travellers and of the men themselves, who succumbed to fatigue. A delegation which the railwaymen had chosen to approach the owners in

[1] *The Green Book*, 1907, quoted by S. and B. Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, revised edition 1920, p. 527.

[2] Richard Bell, speech at Glasgow, November 4, 1907.

[3] 63 & 64 Vict., Cap. 27: An Act for the better Prevention of Accidents on Railways (*Railway Employment* [*Prevention of Accidents*] *Act*, 1900.)

[4] G. W. Alcock, *Fifty Years of Railway Trade Unionism*, p. 348.

their name was still remembered, for it had been composed almost wholly of maimed men.[1] The companies disputed the Union's figures. They pointed out that in estimating the wages received, no account had been taken of the special advantages enjoyed by railway employees as compared with those of other companies. They received clothing, often also lodging, were secured against the risk of unemployment and provided with a retiring pension. They also pointed out that the hours of a railwayman could not be fairly compared with those of a miner or textile worker, for the former was frequently on duty without any work to perform. As regards accidents, the men had obtained protective legislation which had cost the companies dear. The latter could not compensate themselves by raising their rates, for these were fixed by law in the public interest. Indeed, without a previous inquiry the companies could not even charge the maximum rates permitted by statute.[2] The shares of every company were falling as the direct result of the decrease in dividends. In 1907 the average dividend did not exceed 3½ per cent, in ten years it had fallen by 2½ per cent. If the workers' claims were granted it would fall to 2 per cent.[3]

The companies searched for a way out of a position disastrous in itself, even if no concessions were made to the men. At first the British railway system had been one of genuine competition. The companies had multiplied competing routes between the same cities and for as long as possible sought to attract travellers by lowering their rates to the advantage of the public, if not of their employees. Now, however, when the common desire of all the companies was to increase their rates, competition was no longer a reality. Working agreements were concluded between several companies, sometimes relating to rates, sometimes extending to the speed of the trains, and sometimes enabling the companies to divide the traffic according to a fixed proportion. Why not take the final step? This very year 1907 the Great Northern, the Great Central, and the Great Eastern railways were engaged in working out a scheme of amalgamation for which in 1909 they sought in

[1] T. A. Brocklebank, *Mammon's Victims: A Revelation to the Nation; A Text-Book for Workers and Coroners*, 1912, p. 75, which on this point refers to a pamphlet published by John Burns in 1899.

[2] Edwin A. Pratt, *Railways and their Rates . . .* 1906, pp. 12 sqq.

[3] Ibid., p. 42; *The Times*, September 16, 1907, 'The Railway Dispute'; *The Economist*, May 11, 1907, 'The Railway Position'.

vain legal sanction.[1] It was defeated by the hostility of the Labour members. They did not object in principle to the amalgamation of some 200 British railway companies in one large organization. But they did not want that organization with its monopoly of the national railway system to be a private company working to make profit at the expense of the public and its employees alike. In the interest of both they demanded that the railways should be nationalized. Until 1906 the nationalization of the railways had been the Utopia of a few cranks. It now became a plank of the Labour platform, passionately defended and attacked in an entire series of articles and pamphlets.[2]

Nationalization however did not figure among the claims which the Railwaymen's Unions put forward in 1907 and which they termed 'the national programme'. They were content to demand reductions of hours and increases of wages. They asked for a regular eight-hours' day for certain classes of workers, a ten-hours' day for the rest, and a minimum rest of nine hours between the work of two consecutive days, the laying down of definite conditions for overtime work, an immediate increase of two shillings in the wages of all men working more than eight hours a day, and an additional three shillings a day for all employed in the London stations.[3] These were the demands which they invited the companies to discuss with their representatives and this last request was itself a claim, more important perhaps than those contained in the programme. The railwaymen called upon the railway companies to follow the example of the coalowners and textile manufacturers and recognize the Union leaders freely chosen by the men as their authorized representatives. Where that prac-

[1] See the debates H. of C., April 5, 1909 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 1909, 5th Series, vol. iii, pp. 798 sqq.). The amalgamation was sanctioned in principle but the clauses were never discussed and the entire question referred to a select committee which reported in 1911 (*Report of the Departmental Committee on Railway Agreements and Amalgamations*, April 11, 1911).

[2] For nationalization: William Cunningham, *Railway Nationalisation*, 1906; Clement Edwards, *Railway Nationalisation*, 1898, 2nd edition revised with preface by Sir Charles Dilke, 1907; G. L. Wardle, *Railway Nationalisation*, 1908; W. Bolland, *The Railways and the Nation, Problems and Possibilities*, 1909; Emil Davies, *State Purchase of Railways*, Fabian Tract No. 150, 1910; *Nationalisation of Railways*, 2nd edition, 1911; *The Case for Railway Nationalisation*, I.L.P. Pamphlet, 1912. Against: Edwin A. Pratt, *State Railways*, 1907; *Railways and their Rates with an appendix on the British Coal Problem*, 1903; *Railway Nationalisation*, 1908. For arguments on both sides see the debates H. of C., February 11, 1908; G. A. Hardy's motion (*Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., vol. clxxxiii, pp. 1612 sqq.); Lloyd George's speech (ibid., pp. 1637 sqq.).

[3] The programme is reproduced in full in Charles Watney and James A. Little, *Industrial Warfare, The Aims and Claims of Capital and Labour*, 1912, pp. 55–7.

tice had been adopted what bad results had followed? Did not the chairman of the Amalgamated Society, Richard Bell, show as much wisdom and moderation as the officials of the miners' and textile workers' unions? Indeed, his moderation went so far that he refused to join the Labour party, a refusal which provoked an organized opposition in his Union, led by a young Welshman, J. H. Thomas. The companies, however, refused to negotiate with the Union officials. They regarded themselves as a public service in which the interest of the community required a military discipline. The weapon employed by the Union was the strike or its threat; to recognize the Union would be to recognize implicitly the lawfulness of a general strike in so important a national service. It was a strange argument in the mouths of men who obstinately opposed nationalization of the railways. And it was brought forward at a particularly inopportune moment, since the Postmaster-General under the new Liberal Cabinet, Sydney Buxton, had just recognized the Postal Clerks' Association. The directors of the great companies stood firm. The Railwaymen's Union, they said, represented only a minority of their employees, less than 100,000 out of some 600,000. Why should this minority be given the right to speak on behalf of all the railwaymen?[1] The railwaymen replied by contesting the directors' figures. The total number of men employed by the companies, eligible for membership of the Amalgamated Society, did not exceed 200,000. Half of these were therefore already members and the number was continually increasing. It had almost doubled during the last five years. Why should it not double itself again during the next five? Nor had the companies any right to regard the railwaymen who were not members of the Union as its convinced enemies. The vast majority consisted of shirkers, only too glad to let others fight their battles. But this did not alter the fact that when Richard Bell presented the national programme he was not yet supported by compact battalions. Not only had his Union much leeway to make up before its organization equalled that of the great Mining and Textile Unions. The railwaymen's forces were also divided among several Unions. There were separate Unions for Scotland and Ireland. There was a separate Union for the unskilled workers. There was a Railway Clerks' Association founded in 1897 to contain all the clerical workers. And above all there had been in

[1] *The Economist*, September 21, 1907; *The Times*, September and October 1907.

existence since 1880 an Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, a wealthy and compact Union of the engine drivers and mechanics, concerned only with the interests of its own group and extremely conservative. It stood resolutely apart. On the other hand, the companies did not present a solid front. An association of companies had indeed been formed to consult on the best methods of defending their common interests. But among the great companies one, at least, the North-Eastern, separated itself from the others on the vital question of recognizing the Union. In short, when for the first time on all the railways of the United Kingdom employers and men were arrayed in battle against each other, the concentration of their respective forces was still in progress. It had not yet been completed.

Bell, assisted by two expert economists, published a large volume of statistics dealing with the conditions of labour on the railways. The companies replied to his 'green book' by a 'red book' in which they tried to disprove his figures. They also published a pamphlet denouncing 'the national programme and all it stands for', which Bell answered in a counter-pamphlet entitled *The Railwaymen's Charter*. But the conflict did not stop at a war of pamphlets. In March, the House of Commons adopted a motion which declared the hours of work on the railways excessive, demanded a stricter execution of the existing laws and the passage of new legislation, if the existing statutes were proved to be inadequate.[1] In May, Lloyd George, making use of the powers conferred upon him by an Act of 1889, called upon the companies to submit to him an account of all the days of more than twelve hours worked by their staffs during the preceding month and announced his intention to repeat the demand every three months. On May 11 the railwaymen, encouraged by these expressions of sympathy by the majority in Parliament and the Board of Trade, organized a mass meeting to present 'the national programme'. There was anxiety on the Stock Exchange. Railway shares fell two and a half to five points. And the anxiety increased when on September 15 the Committee of the Union announced its intention to take a vote of its members on the question of a strike. Since the companies persisted in their refusal to recognize the Union, the vote was taken. Lord Claud Hamilton, Chairman of

[1] H. of C., March 6, 1907, Harvey's motion (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxx, pp. 885 sqq.).

the Great Eastern Railway, caused widespread indignation by a manifesto in which he denounced not only the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants but trade-unionism as a whole and maintained that war had been openly declared upon individualism by the Socialist forces. When at the close of October the result of the voting became known it appeared that 76,925 votes had been given in favour of striking, only 8,773 against it.

It was at this point that Lloyd George intervened, determined to prevent a strike. No doubt from the outset he had good reason to feel confident that the negotiations he was undertaking would have a favourable issue. Among the companies and their supporters Lord Claud's intemperate language was not generally approved. In these circles, as in the House of Lords, it was clearly understood how dangerous it was from the political standpoint to arouse the hostility of the working class. On the other hand, the Union, or at least the Committee, was not sufficiently certain of victory really to desire a strike. Though the General Railway Workers' Union had joined the movement and had voted almost unanimously for the strike, the Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen had adopted a totally different attitude, refusing even to take part in the referendum. Finally, a way out of the impasse was found. The authorized representatives of the companies did not meet the authorized representatives of the Union, but both in turn met Lloyd George and his assistants at the Board of Trade, and the agreement worked out at these separate meetings was separately signed by the 'authorized representatives' of both parties. The Union was recognized without being recognized. The actual agreement was conceived in the same spirit. It did not settle the question of hours and wages but referred them for settlement to an entirely new organization set up for 'conciliation' and 'arbitration'. Hitherto, the men had to present their grievances to the head of their department. He in turn referred the matter, though not until he thought fit, to a board on which the employees were in a minority; and there was no appeal from the decision at which he arrived after consultation with the board. In future there would be an entire hierarchy of 'conciliation boards' at which both sides would be equally represented. The men's repre sentatives must be employees of the company's. The board would sit twice a month. From the boards which dealt with disputes in the first instance an appeal lay to 'sectional' boards and from these

in turn to a 'central board'. And if the men were still unsatisfied by its decision, they could demand that the dispute should be referred to an umpire. The Union was not actually recognized, for the provision that the members of the board must be employees excluded its committees. But the latter could use their constantly increasing authority to secure that all the men's representatives on the boards were union men and the settlement undoubtedly constituted for the railwaymen a considerable advance on their previous position. Moreover it could be denounced only by a previous notice of twelve months and in any case not for six years. Peace was thus ensured until the end of 1914[1].

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By his Merchant Shipping and Patent Acts Lloyd George had made himself popular with the shipowners and manufacturers. By his striking and skilful intervention in the railway dispute he established a reputation for statesmanship both with politicians of every party and in the world of business. A month later he again intervened in a trade dispute and won another victory. Among the Lancashire cotton spinners, on the whole better paid than they had ever been, the fine spinners of Oldham complained that their wages were too low in proportion to those received by their fellow spinners and claimed their share of the considerable increase of wages in their branch of the industry. In vain they attempted to negotiate. The millowners refused even to consider their claims, which they denounced as a breach of the Brooklands Agreement. The spinners on their side announced their intention to take a referendum of the Union on the question of a strike. Lloyd George made a personal visit to Manchester and, though he did not succeed in his apparent desire to be appointed umpire, he was at least successful in overcoming the millowners' obstinacy and persuading them to agree to a joint meeting of owners and operatives. At the opening of December an agreement was concluded which, though it did not grant the operatives everything they had asked, raised their wages by 9 per cent, an increase of from

[1]For the struggle see *Strikes and Lock-outs: Board of Trade* (*Labour Department*), *Report on Strikes and Lock-outs in the United Kingdom 1907*, 1908, pp. 49 sqq.; Lord Askwith, *Industrial Problems and Disputes*, 1920, pp. 113 sqq.; M. Alfassa, *Une Solution nouvelle des Conflits*, 1908

five shillings to six shillings a week. Some 8,000 operatives benefited by this quasi-arbitral award.[1]

A third success followed, two months later. Its field was the engineering and shipbuilding industry. The agitation began in the Clyde dockyards and among the carpenters—known as the White Squad in contrast to the Black Squad, the iron and steel workers. A year earlier they had considered a strike for higher wages. Now they were on the defensive, refusing to accept a reduction accepted by the Black Squad. Four thousand men went on strike and as they were receiving strike pay from the General Federation of Trade Unions, the employers threatened to reply to the strike by a lock-out in all the industries of the district whose employees were affiliated to the Federation. The Union Executive advised submission. The strikers refused, and the strike spread to the important Amalgamated Society of Engineers. The Society, which had been reconstituted and had gathered new strength after its defeat in 1897, had just concluded a comprehensive and detailed agreement for the amicable settlement on an equal footing of all disputes between employers and men in the engineering industry. The workers refused to agree to wage reductions, accepted, in accordance with the terms of the agreement, by the local committees of the Union. If partial concessions made by the employers satisfied the engineers on the Clyde, they did not satisfy the engineers on the Tyne where 12,000 went on strike. Once again Lloyd George offered the services of the Board of Trade, and on February 20, 1908, had the satisfaction of seeing the terms of a provisional settlement accepted by Sir Andrew Noble, the employers' representative, and the representatives of the Unions.[2]

'By the force of his personality,' *The Economist* wrote, 'Mr. Lloyd George has made his office transcend the statutory duties imposed upon it. Three times within a few months Mr. George has successfully settled disputes in the largest industries of the country, and in each case averted a disturbance to trade which would have spread beyond the immediate area affected.'[3] The agitation did not in fact cease immediately either on the railways or in the cotton industry. The struggle was still continued by the

[1] *The Economist*, December 7, 1907; *Strikes and Lock-outs: Board of Trade (Labour Department) Report on Strikes and Lock-outs . . . in 1907*, pp. 55 sqq.

[2] *The Economist*, February 8, 22, 1908; *Strikes and Lock-outs: Board of Trade (Labour Department) Report on Strikes and Lock-outs . . . in 1908*, pp. 41 sqq.

[3] *The Economist*, February 29, 1908.

carpenters on the Clyde, and among the engineers of the Clyde and Tyne the strike broke out afresh in spite of the efforts of the men's leaders. If, nevertheless, after a longer or shorter interval the policy of compromise finally prevailed, it was due not so much to the skilful handling of Lloyd George, as to the unfavourable condition of trade, the crisis into which British industry was suddenly plunged.

The crisis did not originate in Great Britain nor was it most acute there. It was the repercussion of a crisis which had occurred in the two countries—the United States and Germany—which were now the most progressive industrial nations of the world. In those countries the progress of industry had been so rapid once the difficulties of 1902 had been overcome that they had not only ceased to export their iron and steel to Great Britain but actually imported British iron and steel. Now, however, a new glut had been produced, first in the United States, then in Germany. Money became scarce, manufacturers went bankrupt, banks failed. Not only were the American and German markets closed to British goods, but the British market was once more threatened with dumping. Prices fell steadily from a maximum in May 1907, until the end of the year, when for the first time for many years the general price level was lower than the year before. In April 1908 prices reached their lowest level, but as winter succeeded autumn and the year 1909 opened no perceptible rise had taken place. As before in 1902 but with greater anxiety, men were asking whether the rise of prices witnessed for several years had not been after all a temporary phenomenon and a new period of low prices and industrial stagnation were not beginning for Britain, for Europe, indeed for the entire world. The hopes of the tariff reformers revived, and a few by-elections won by Unionists seemed to sanction their optimism. The workers, on the other hand, lost heart. They had failed to take advantage of the boom in trade when it set in at the turn of the century; they had been defeated by so many unsuccessful strikes and adverse decisions of the courts. The Election of January 1906 and the passing of the Trade Disputes Bill had restored their confidence. Must they now witness the sudden check of a movement so full of promise? We may say at once that the tariff reformers' hopes were speedily disappointed. For they depended on the trade depression. And from March 1909 prices began once more to rise, and trade revived.

After a year in which exports and imports had achieved a record, only 1908 had witnessed a diminution of foreign trade. The figures for 1909 were already improving, those for 1910 would exceed the record established in 1907 and the expansion of trade would continue until the eve of the Great War. The improvement was due in part to an increase in the amount of exports and imports, in part to an increase in their value. In the decade from 1904 to 1914 prices rose by 22 per cent. This was undoubtedly because of a fall in the value of gold. A similar phenomenon had occurred about the middle of the nineteenth century following on the discovery and development of the Californian goldfields. Subsequently, these goldfields had become exhausted and the fall of prices had been so rapid that to remedy the scarcity of gold economists had advocated bimetallism. Now, however, new methods of gold mining had been invented by which the ore could be extracted from beds at a deeper level, and the more these were perfected the greater became the number of beds—not only in South Africa but in North America and Australia—where gold existed in sufficient quantities to be worth mining. In a work published in 1912 the economist Layton pointed out that since 1896 gold had been mined to the value of £1,000,000,000 sterling, four times the amount mined during the first fifty years of the nineteenth century and almost half the total stocks of gold available.[1] The formidable dislocations of currency we have experienced of recent years have made us forget those of the period before the war. The latter would have been more severe than they were if Asia on the one hand, the United States on the other, had not absorbed far larger quantities of gold than had been expected. Even so, they were sufficiently serious to cause anxiety to a considerable number of expert economists and induce them to inquire whether some other standard of exchange should not be substituted for gold, lacking as it did the indispensable stability. And the workers enrolled under the banner of the trade unions after the discouragement and hesitation of the winter of 1907–8 renewed their campaign with even greater vigour, demanding by strikes or threats of striking their share in the increasing prosperity of trade, and calling upon Parliament to pass new legislation to protect the interests of their class.

[1] Walter T. Layton, *An Introduction to the Study of Prices with special reference to the History of the Nineteenth Century*, 1912, pp. 83–4.

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What then, everything considered, was the political situation when Parliament met at the opening of February 1908? The Government's majority, slightly reduced by a few by-elections won by Labour or Unionist candidates, was still practically speaking as overwhelming as it had been two years earlier. But the Conservative Opposition, impotent in the Commons, possessed in the Lords a permanent majority as large as that which since 1906 the Radicals had possessed in the Lower House. The entire strategy of the two official leaders of the Unionist party, Balfour and Lord Lansdowne, consisted in using the House of Lords as an instrument to exert a permanent pressure on the Liberal majority, by rejecting among the Bills sent up to it all those and no more which it could safely reject without endangering the popularity of the party in the present House of Commons and ruining its chances at the next Election The Irish question did not come before the House of Lords, since Irish intransigence had brought the Irish Council Bill to a premature demise. Asquith's budgets, to which we shall return later, prudently democratic, very economical, and always disposing of a surplus, were universally popular after years of extravagance. Moreover, was it not accepted that in finance the House of Commons was absolute master and that for the House of Lords financial questions did not even exist? There remained the question of religious education in the schools. Also the question of Labour legislation. Undeniably the House of Lords during the last two sessions in handling these two problems had taken skilful advantage of the power conferred upon it by constitutional custom to 'sift' the Bills sent up by the Liberal Government.

On the Education Bill the victory had undeniably lain with the Lords. The Cabinet never retrieved the defeat it had suffered at the close of 1906. Admittedly, it did not dare to dissolve Parliament and appeal to the electorate to implement its desire to satisfy the Nonconformist claims. It was obvious that the nation had no interest in their claims. No doubt the Government continued to announce by the mouth of the Premier or one of his subordinates that it had prepared all its plans to alter the constitution on the first opportunity and in particular to curtail the powers of the

House of Lords. Would it dissolve on this issue itself? It had no intention of doing so. A conflict must first be provoked between the two Houses on some other question better adapted than the question of religious education in the schools, to arouse popular feeling. Should it be the question of reforming the franchise? In 1906 the Government had attempted to carry a Bill to abolish the plural vote which by enabling wealthy voters to vote during the same election under different qualifications in several constituencies benefited the Unionist party. The House of Lords had thrown out the Bill without a debate, refusing to pronounce on the question until a measure dealing comprehensively with the franchise as a whole was sent up. Should the Government accept the challenge and bring forward such a measure? Should it attempt to make Great Britain a country of universal suffrage in the full sense of the term by giving every citizen an equal vote and equalizing the constituencies? It was however far from certain in 1908 that a reform of this kind would arouse popular enthusiasm. Compactly organized in their unions the workers had secured under the existing franchise, in spite of the fact that it was not yet universal, the passage of the Trade Disputes Bill with a most significant speed. Surely they would be well advised, instead of waiting for a reform of the franchise, to obtain from Parliament, as at present elected, further legislation from which they would reap immediate and practical benefit? A measure, for example establishing a system of workers' old age pensions. Chamberlain had promised it but had broken his promise. Was it not a duty strictly incumbent upon the Liberal party to repair this breach of faith by setting up that system of universal old age pensions without contribution from the workers which the Trade Union Congress demanded every summer? Or again a statute or body of statutes ensuring the workers against unemployment? The suggestion had been put forward in 1902 and 1903, when industry was suffering from a depression that was almost a crisis, and the Unionist Cabinet had even taken some steps in this direction, though they did not amount to very much. Now, when a severe industrial depression once more prevailed, more serious than that of 1902, the workers' demands became more insistent. In 1902 John Burns had criticized the Government's attitude. What would he do at present when he was President of the Local Government Board?

The speech from the throne which opened the new session at the close of January 1908 gave the most prominent place to the question of old age pensions for workmen. But would it provide the opportunity for a victorious battle with the Lords? Would not the reform be carried too easily, because the Unionist Party and the Lords would vie in its support with the Liberal majority in the Commons? This indeed had been the tactics pursued by the Lords for the last two years. They had accepted the Workmen's Insurance Act and the Trade Disputes Bill, yielding, like the ministerialists themselves, to the pressure of the working masses from outside, officially represented in the House of Commons by a tiny group of fifty members. The Church of England, whose stronghold was the House of Lords, had adopted the same tactics, and the bench of bishops had been careful to dissociate itself from the attacks upon Socialism delivered by politicians, whether Liberal or Conservative, provided the Socialism in question were not hostile to the family or the Christian religion. The Liberal leaders therefore found themselves in a quandary. They were faced with the problem of devising a measure of social legislation whose effects would be so far-reaching that the House of Lords could neither accept it without humiliation, nor reject it without imperilling its prerogatives and even its existence. After two years of Liberal legislation one fact at least was established beyond doubt. The Election of 1906, on the surface a victory of free trade, and apparently a Nonconformist victory, had been in reality and at bottom a victory of the proletariat.

CHAPTER II

Foreign Policy: The Army and Navy

I FROM THE CONFERENCE OF ALGECIRAS TO THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT

I

TO understand how the international situation was regarded by the British Government and people at the opening of 1906 we must begin by speaking not of England, but of Germany, the leading Continental nation, whose power focused the attention of all the other nations, and had begun to create universal anxiety. What had been for more than thirty years the guiding principle of German foreign policy? At first, when Bismarck was at the helm, Germany's sole desire was to consolidate in peace the unity conquered within a few years by two wars, startling alike in their speed and decisive results. She had pursued a policy ungenerous to be sure, but not in the least aggressive, selfish but prudent. Friendly towards all the powers, even France, if France would accept her friendship, she was content to foster their mutual rivalries in order to prevent the formation of such a coalition as had previously been fatal to the French hegemony. Then William II had succeeded to the throne, had dismissed Bismarck and soon inaugurated a more ambitious programme. He wished to give Germany a strong navy. His policy had therefore been anti-British. He had entertained the dream of uniting under his overlordship all the nations of Europe to challenge Britain's naval supremacy. His grandiose project had been defeated by the opposition of France and, while still hoping to resume it at some later date when France had forgotten the loss of Alsace and he had completed the construction of his fleet, he had returned temporarily to Bismarck's policy of prudence. It had been completely successful so long as the Boer War continued. Now, however, when the war was at an end and England no longer preoccupied with South Africa, the British Government had inaugurated the new policy of an *entente cordiale* with France. How

could Germany apply to this *entente*, which upset all the traditions of European diplomacy, the old principles which had given Europe thirty years of peace, herself thirty years of steadily increasing power? Alternatively, what new principles should she adopt? To the men who decided German foreign policy the change of Government in England in December 1905 was a welcome augury.

The 'Tangier' episode a few months before had been her first attempt to break the Anglo-French *entente*, scarcely a year old, and detach France from England by demonstrating the dangers and humiliations to which her friendship with England exposed her. Delcassé had fallen, at a nod from the Emperor William, and in January the powers were to meet, at Germany's request, to restrict the freedom Britain had undertaken to bestow on France in Morocco, thus inflicting indirectly on the British Government an abasement almost equal to that suffered by the French. But at this very moment Balfour and Lord Lansdowne disappeared from the scene and their successors—so it was hoped in the Wilhelmstrasse —would be well placed to abandon without the humiliation of a retreat the principles on which their predecessors' policy had been based. Moreover, the new cabinet was a Liberal cabinet, in which the pro-Boers of yesterday seemed the preponderating element.

Morley, whose creed was peace at any price, and who in 1898 had broken with the official Liberal party because in his opinion its opposition to Chamberlain's imperialism was too feeble, came back in triumph. Bryce, like Morley, an old Gladstonian, was the historian of the Teutonic Holy Roman Empire and the American Republic, an intellectual 'Protestant' whose sympathies were with the Teutonic rather than the Latin peoples. Sir Robert Reid, now Chancellor under the title of Lord Loreburn, shared this point of view. So did John Burns, an inveterate enemy of France, whose authority in the cabinet was indeed far less than Morley's or Bryce's but who was highly respected by the middle class. Everyone regarded Haldane as the typical pro-German. Finally, the Prime Minister, Campbell-Bannerman, had shown himself throughout the Boer War the determined foe of a bellicose policy. He was, it is true, anything but an enemy of France. He was a lover of French culture, and an enthusiastic reader of French novels, more capable than any British premier for many a long

year of addressing in excellent French delegations from across the Channel who were given an official reception in London. But he wanted the reconciliation with France to be the prelude to a general reconciliation with all the European powers, Germany first of all. The overwhelming victory the Liberal party had won in the January Election had visibly augmented his influence from this point of view, both in the Cabinet and the House. That victory indeed was due to the numerous domestic issues we have already studied. But it signified also, many observers would have said first and foremost, that the entire nation—workers, business men, and intelligentsia—was weary of the aggressive imperialism which ten years earlier had brought the revived Conservative party into power. To please the crowds one must no longer talk of conquests, colonial expansion, national honour.

How then are we to explain the fact that after the revolution at the polls of January 1906 British foreign policy remained exactly what it had been before? In the first place we must remember the influence exercised within the Cabinet by the imperialist group. Its members had secured offices of exceptional importance. They were younger, more brilliant, and everyone expected them to be more active than such veterans as Morley, Bryce or Campbell-Bannerman. It was their conviction, a conviction proclaimed emphatically more than once by Lord Rosebery, that the foreign policy of the United Kingdom must be 'continuous', unaffected by the vicissitudes of the party struggle; and the prudent Asquith and the restless Haldane, who dressed his window with German goods but sold merchandise of a very different character, gave wholehearted support to the new Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, who was himself the more ready to continue the policy of an understanding with France, because he had been one of its first advocates, even before the Unionist Cabinet and the officials at the Foreign Office had perceived its advantages. Finally we must not forget the presence of King Edward at the head of the executive. Despite the constitutional fiction that the monarch must always conform his personal views to those of his responsible ministers, public opinion saw in him the true author of the *entente cordiale*. It was believed that the strong dislike he entertained for his nephew, the Emperor William, entered into his desire to see England follow an anti-German policy, that he was using his influence to complete the Anglo-French *entente* by an under-

standing with Russia, and that it was on his recommendation and with this end in view that Sir Charles Hardinge had been appointed Ambassador at Petersburg and returned to London in January 1906 to become permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.[1]

2

We must not, however, exaggerate the part played by any individual, whether Grey at the Foreign Office or King Edward on the throne. We have already had occasion to call attention to the fact that King Edward had been reigning for two years before he perceived the necessity to substitute for the policy of friendship with Germany a policy of friendship with France. In reality, he guided neither public opinion nor the policy of the Foreign Office. He simply made up his mind towards the end of 1902 to follow the lead given by both. Thenceforward he had the good fortune to make himself useful by actions which at the same time made him popular. A lover of travel and public ceremonies, he was the itinerant ambassador of the Foreign Office, its 'super-ambassador'. But he was nothing more than an agent and never initiated a policy which could be called with truth, as it was so often without justification, King Edward's policy. The case of Sir Edward Grey is different, if his conversion to the new foreign policy really

[1] From this it was a short step to regard Edward VII as a man of genius, who operated behind the scenes the machinery of British foreign policy, and many people both in France and Germany took it. See Rudolf Marten, *Kaiser Wilhelm II und König Edward VII*, 1907, p. 31: 'King Edward is the soul of British policy. . . . He is England's unavowed Emperor. The powerful position attributed to the German Emperor by the Prussian and Imperial Constitution, and by constitutional custom and tradition, is occupied by the present King of England without constitutional authority or the sanction of tradition or custom. Whether the Conservatives or Liberals are in office is a matter of indifference. King Edward who stands behind both, rules'; p. 91: 'Edward VII, King of England and Emperor of India, is England's secret Emperor. In him the British nation possesses for the first time a Cæsar.' Emile Flourens, *La France conquise: Edouard VII et Clemenceau* [1906] (a clerical and anti-English work), p. 105: 'Edward VII has nothing of the commonplace tyrant. A despot who makes his will obeyed he has made the concealment of the iron hand in a velvet glove a fine art. He detests the manner of a despot and the pose of a conqueror. With a subtle perception which long experience has rendered more acute he knows the exact moment when the opposition must be crushed by brute force and he never shrinks from employing it. But his favourite weapon is persuasion which he wields in every conceivable shape with the dexterity of a past master. His expert knowledge of the human heart and of the French character in particular has taught him how to use with unerring skill the method of persuasion most appropriate to the tastes and desires of the individual in question.'

preceded that of the Foreign Office, if he was among its originators, and if it was for that reason that in December 1905 the Foreign Office wanted to have him as its chief. But when this has been granted, we must not misconceive Grey's political calibre. He was not of the lineage of Canning and Palmerston, one of those men with an innate genius for diplomatic intrigue and the manipulation of public opinion, who are happy only in their office, as the ideal sea captain is happy only on the poop of his ship. The ten years of Unionist government had been for him ten years of repose, during which he had performed, not too strenuously, the ritual of an opposition speaker. When he achieved the summit of his ambition he found himself, as it were, caught in the wheels of the formidable machine he had hoped to control and carried along by them. Even the loss in 1906 of a wife with whom he had lived in a close communion of tastes and ideas did not plunge him in despair into a maelstrom of activity. On the contrary, we receive the impression of a weary and disillusioned man. He continued a lover of the country, a student of bird life who looked forward the entire week to the week-end which would allow him to forget the affairs of Europe and escape to his beloved nature. And this phlegmatic temper which had nothing in common with the temperament of a Canning, a Palmerston and still less of a Chamberlain explains the fact that he was able to pursue the new policy which had been followed by the Foreign Office for the past two or three years with the utmost possible moderation. He appears indeed to have given it an interpretation predominantly negative, and his object was not so much an alliance with a particular European power against Germany as to prevent Germany from forming such an alliance against England. If, therefore, the Foreign Office sought on occasion to draw too close the bonds uniting Britain with her new friends, and his colleagues were alarmed from time to time by the prospect of the conflicts with Germany which the British foreign policy might involve, Sir Edward was just the right person to mediate between the Cabinet and the Foreign Office, and blur the features of the new policy without ever giving it up. Moreover, the balance of power which was his political creed of its very nature excluded a permanent alliance with one power against another, since the shifting equilibrium of national forces in Europe required that England should as far as possible remain free to transfer her weight

from one scale to the other.[1] And since Chamberlain's imperialism had until 1902 been deliberately hostile to France and Russia, the subsequent change of friendships could be interpreted in two different ways. It might be regarded as a new orientation of British imperialism, and it was in this sense that it was understood by Asquith, Haldane, and Grey himself. Or it could be interpreted as an entire repudiation of the preceding imperialism, and it was because it was presented in this light that it escaped the censure of the Gladstonian veterans in the Cabinet. Assisted by so many favourable circumstances, Grey managed to acquire in a few months an amazing prestige not only in England but on the Continent,[2] and the candour, honesty, and entire disinterestedness to which everyone paid tribute invested a policy often ambiguous with the halo of his personal honour.[3]

In any case there can be no question of King Edward's policy, or Sir Edward Grey's, if by that is meant a policy imposed upon the Foreign Office or even suggested to it by either. There was a policy of the Foreign Office with which the private views of the King and the Foreign Secretary happened to coincide. It was in truth the policy which circumstances dictated and against which they would have attempted in vain to rebel. 'The Germans', Sir Edward wrote with truth, 'do not realize that England has always drifted or deliberately gone into opposition to any Power which establishes her hegemony in Europe.'[4] We have already witnessed

[1] 'So long as England remains faithful to the general principle of the preservation of the balance of power, her interests would not be served by Germany being reduced to the rank of a weak Power, as this might easily lead to a Franco-Russian predominance equally, if not more, formidable to the British Empire. There are no existing German rights, territorial or other, which this country could wish to see diminished. Therefore, so long as Germany's action does not overstep the line of legitimate protection of existing rights, she can always count upon the sympathy and good will, and even the moral support of England . . .' ('Memorandum by Mr. Eyre Crowe,' Foreign Office. January 1, 1907; *British Documents* . . . vol. iii, p. 417).

[2] Metternich to Prince von Bülow, March 23, 1909: 'In questions of foreign policy no one exercises such great influence over his fellow countrymen as Sir Edward Grey. His word is its own guarantee' (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxviii, p. 126). *Daily News*, September 2, 1907: 'It is with reluctance that a Liberal newspaper criticizes the act of a minister whose personality exercises a magnetism amounting almost to fascination over the House of Commons.'

[3] For Sir Edward Grey's policy see Gilbert Murray, *The Foreign Policy of Sir Edward Grey, 1906–15*, 1915 (a defence with which we may contrast Hamilton Fyfe's satirical reflections, *The Making of an Optimist*, 1921, p. 40); also Herman Letz, *Lord Grey und der Weltkrieg: Ein Schlüssel zum Verständnis der britischen aemtlichen Aktenpublikation uber den Kriegsausbruch 1914*, 1927 (English translation 1928), a work which if perhaps not sufficiently impartial is nevertheless well documented and contains many acute psychological observations.

[4] Minute written on June 9, 1906; *British Documents* . . . vol. iii, p. 359.

and shall continue to witness Germany's efforts to break the *ententes* which were forming around her, efforts whose sole result will be to strengthen them until at last the circle which surrounds her is drawn tight and firm. Indeed, Russia, France, and England will themselves on occasion attempt to loosen the framework of the new system. In vain: it will resist all attempts to destroy or weaken it. We cannot conceive the statesman of genius or the master stroke of policy that during these critical years could have diverted the fatal course of events. The system was Europe's automatic reply to the growth of German power.

3

Picture the situation in January 1906. The Conference of Algeciras was about to meet to determine the future status of Morocco by a common agreement between all the signatories of the convention of Madrid. England, however, was in the throes of a General Election. The newspapers wrote of nothing else, and the Ministers had not even the leisure to hold a Cabinet Council. Every Minister had his hands full, courting the voters in his constituency half the week, and getting into touch with the business of his department the rest of the time. Sir Edward Grey, however, while assuring the German ambassador that the policy of friendship with France pursued by the Foreign Office for the last three years implied no distrust of Germany, expressed his personal conviction that, if Germany made the question of Morocco a pretext for declaring war on France, British public opinion would not allow the Government to remain neutral, and even, if we may believe Metternich, expressed himself in plainer terms than Lord Lansdowne had used six months before.[1] On the other hand, it would seem that the Liberal victory at the polls exceeded his expectation and made him doubt whether under any circumstances the British public would entertain the prospect of war. And on January 31 he advised the French Ambassador, Paul Cambon, to that effect.[2] And King Edward himself seems to have been im-

[1] Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Lascelles, January 9, 1906 (*British Documents* . . vol. iii, pp. 209–10); Metternich to Prince von Bülow, January 3, 1906 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxi,[1] pp. 47–50).

[2] Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie, January 31, 1906 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iii, pp. 180 sqq.) especially p. 181: 'M Cambon must remember that England at the present

pressed by the vigorous disavowal by the electorate of imperialism in any shape or form. On January 23 he wrote to the Emperor William in extremely cordial terms suggesting a meeting in the near future and offering his services as mediator to settle by an amicable compromise the dispute between France and Germany in Morocco.

But the Kaiser's reply, though couched in polite language, was a flat refusal of the proffered mediation.[1] The purpose of his action at Tangier had been to prevent England from acting as arbitrator in Morocco. It was not for him to give way eight months later. The King of England and his ministers had therefore no option but to give the French claims unreserved diplomatic support, to which indeed they were pledged by the agreement of April 1904. A journalist, Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, was the King's private agent at Algeciras; Sir Arthur Nicolson, the British Ambassador at Madrid, the official representative of the Government. The Cabinet allowed the King to give British support the same theatrical setting as a year earlier. On his way to Biarritz he stopped at Paris. He visited the President, Loubet's successor, Fallières, ignored the Prime Minister, and had a long interview in a private house with Delcassé. The conversation was a significant step eight months after Delcassé's fall and four months after the indiscreet revelations of the Parisian press which, even if not accepted as reliable in every detail, had implanted in every country in Europe the firm belief that military measures against Germany had been concerted between England and France the previous spring.

What were these French claims which England pledged herself to support? By the very fact of going to Algeciras, France admitted that she had been wrong in not asking all the signatories of the Madrid Convention to sanction her establishment of a quasi-protectorate in Morocco. But she intended to seek that sanction and the sole difference between her intentions in 1904 and the demand she put forward now was that the more-or-less avowed protectorate for which she asked would be exercised under the control of the powers, would be a 'mandate' conferred upon her by them

moment would be most reluctant to find herself engaged in a great war, and I hesitated to express a decided opinion as to whether the strong feeling of the Press and of public opinion on the side of France would be strong enough to overcome the great reluctance which existed amongst us now to find ourselves involved in war.'

[1] King Edward to the Emperor William, January 23; the Emperor William to King Edward, February 5 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxi[1], pp. 108 sqq.). Cf. William II's observations on a telegram from Count Bernstorff of January 16 (ibid., p. 95).

and subject to certain conditions ensuring more effectively than the agreement of 1904 freedom of trade for all nations. To this programme Germany opposed a system of complete internationalization under which no power, least of all France, could enjoy a privileged position. It was the system the European powers had attempted to set up in Macedonia a few months before, and whose failure was already reported. Alone among the powers of Europe, Germany had refused to agree to it. In Morocco the position was reversed. But in both instances the German Government was pursuing the same policy. Champion in its own interest of the independence of the Mediterranean powers, it regarded the installation of an international police force in Macedonia as a violation of the Sultan's sovereignty which it sought to maintain unimpaired. In Morocco it was the inevitable minimum of interference which it would advise the Government of Fez to accept to avoid a worse fate.[1] Between the two proposals compromise was impossible. If before the Conference France and Germany could have reached an understanding for the settlement of the Moroccan question, how quickly its work would have been completed! And how much time would have been gained for the pacification of Europe! But Berlin had rejected all the proposals for an agreement whether official or unofficial which had been received from Paris after Delcassé's fall. Was it because the German Emperor and his Chancellor were deliberately hostile to the French policy in Morocco? A year after Algeciras, when a leading French statesman renewed the proposal already made in the autumn of 1905—that French control in Morocco should be recognized in return for compensation in some other part of Africa—the Congo for example—the Emperor William replied that he was not opposed to French suzerainty in Morocco, that he did not even want any compensation: what he wanted was 'an alliance'.[2] He thus revealed the secret of his policy, as he had already revealed it to the Czar Nicholas in August 1905 at their Bjorköe conversations. The Emperor's policy, which among other

[1] For German attempts to effect an understanding between the Sultans see the strange rumours reported from Constantinople by Sir N. O'Connor on February 12 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iii, p. 248).

[2] The Emperor William to Prince von Bülow, June 16, 1907 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxii, pp. 571 sqq.). For this conversation and the rumours current on the subject see the interesting details in two despatches from Sir F. Bertie to his Government, September 12, 1907, and the minute, dated the 16th, attached to the first of these (*British Documents* . . . vol. vi. p. 55 sqq.).

faults suffered from his inability to state it openly on the eve of the Algeciras Conference, was to effect through the mediation of the Russian Government an understanding between France and Germany which would be understood by everyone as a breach with England.

No French statesman dared risk such a policy and the only effect the German Government produced at Paris by suggestions of this kind, implied in every step it took, was to make the position of the advocates of peace difficult, and equally difficult the position of the party, stronger than is recognized to-day, which desired to return to the policy of settling all colonial questions by amicable arrangement with Germany. On the contrary, it strengthened the party which refused to be reconciled to the loss of Alsace and for whom hatred of Germany was the substance of French patriotism. Moreover, while it refused to conclude a preliminary agreement with France, it did not even promise to abide by the free decision of the Conference. It demanded that the Conference should ratify its policy of internationalization. If the demand were refused, the German representative would leave the Conference, and war might be the result. At the unveiling of a monument to Moltke on October 26, 1907, the Emperor William delivered as a toast at the banquet one of those bellicose speeches with which from time to time he liked to flutter Europe. A phrase about 'dry powder and a whetted sword' was never forgotten. Once more panic reigned in French political circles. In feverish haste urgent measures were taken to renew the defences of the eastern frontier which had been neglected for some years.

4

In fact, the German Government did not expect the Conference to break down, When it instructed its representatives never to allow Germany to appear 'isolated' during the proceedings, it evidently regarded its system of internationalization as the most likely to win the approval of all the Governments concerned, with the exception of the French. Did it not serve the interests of all the other nations, even of Great Britain? The attitude adopted by the Foreign Office wore an air of paradox. To honour the pledge given in 1904, avoid a false move in the diplomatic game, and

escape the snare laid by Germany by abandoning its support of the French claim, the British Government sacrificed in Morocco the immediate interests of British trade and industry.[1] The Germans noted with satisfaction that British opinion was not so unanimously favourable to France as it had been at the time of the Tangier episode. One important organ, the *Manchester Guardian*, departing on this question from the bulk of the Liberal Press, openly opposed the French point of view and the more vigorously as the Conference protracted its sessions. At Algeciras on February 3 Count von Tattenbach attempted to win over the British representative and detach him from the cause of France.[2]

His advances met with an extremely cold reception. Sir Arthur Nicolson, who deliberately kept in the background, was content to give his silent support to France, and it soon became evident that Germany's diplomatic position was far worse than Berlin had expected. All the powers who two years before had readily acquiesced in the establishment by France of a sphere of influence in Morocco now found themselves gathered at Algeciras not of their free will to defend their respective rights but to obey the summons of Germany and serve her political interests. It was therefore Germany, not, as she had hoped, France, who found herself the object of universal hostility. Though Italy was bound to Germany by the Triple Alliance, which she had twice renewed, she was also bound to France by an agreement on the question of Morocco. And if Italian opinion could only guess the exact contents of the agreement, it entirely approved of its spirit. Combe's anti-clericalism had demolished once for all the legend that France was in league with the Vatican against the unity of Italy, and France was extremely popular with the lower classes. To England, Italy was bound by even closer ties. It had concluded the Triple Alliance only with the approval, indeed almost on the advice, of England, and if that Alliance should prove to be directed against England, Italy, placed by her geographical condition at the mercy

[1] See the remarkable communication the Foreign Office found itself obliged to transmit on July 3, 1905, to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce: 'I am directed by the Marquess of Lansdowne to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th ultimo on the subject of the Anglo-French convention of the 18th of April 1904 and to state that the Board of Directors of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce appears to be under a misapprehension in supposing that an opportunity is likely to be afforded for revising that Agreement. The Declaration in question has been signed by the two Governments and has already been put into execution and cannot now be altered.' (*British Documents* . . . vol. iii, p. 112).

[2] Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey, February 4 1906 (*Britisn Documents* . . . vol. iii, p. 241).

of the British fleet, would be obliged to denounce it. In Spain, the Government's policy of agreement with France and England had many more enemies. But France assured herself of Spanish support by substituting a Franco-Spanish gendarmerie for the purely French force of her original plan, and by its actions the Spanish court showed its approval of the new arrangement. At the opening of February the rumour was current that King Alphonso XIII had gone to Biarritz to meet Princess Victoria-Eugénie of Battenberg, King Edward's cousin. On March 7 the Princess was received into the Catholic Church and the English monarch came out to Biarritz to arrange a marriage which would place an English princess on the Spanish throne. The situation had changed since the days, still recent, when England, loathed by all the nations of the Continent, had offered Germany an alliance she had refused with disdain. The Emperor William was furious. 'All these Latin nations,' he wrote, 'miserable degenerates that they are, are mere weapons in the hands of England to combat German commerce in the Mediterranean. Not only have we no friends left, but this emasculate race, this scrap-heap of Latin peoples, heartily detests us. As it was in the days of the Hohenstaufens and the House of Anjou so it is now. The Latin riff-raff betray us on every hand and throw themselves into the arms of England, which intends to use them against us.' And as though he had entertained the dream of a pan-Teutonic alliance, he added: 'War between Teutons and Latins on the entire front. And the former, alas, are divided.'[1]

In Russia, England had many foes; the Anglo-French *entente*, concluded in the midst of the war with Japan, was unpopular. William II and Bülow therefore hoped to find in Russia support for their anti-British policy. But even the statesmen most hostile to England—Count Witte at their head—pressed a conciliatory policy upon the Emperor. For in the first place they knew that Russia, ruined by the defeat and revolution, had more need than ever of French money. And in fact the Russian Government would soon be rewarded for not refusing France its diplomatic support by a loan the French banks and, for the first time, the London banks would take up. And the loan would enable her to defeat the revolution.[2] And secondly, Witte and his friends per-

[1] Note to a despatch from the German chargé d'affaires at Madrid, Wilhelm von Stumm, to Prince von Bülow, March 9, 1906 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxii, p. 268).

[2] *The Memoirs of Count Witte* (1849–1916), translated from the original Russian manuscript and edited by Abraham Yarmolinsky, pp. 292 sqq.

ceived that the brusque methods employed by William II were producing the opposite effect to that which he expected, tightening instead of loosening the Anglo-French *entente*. Austria, Germany's ally, had no direct interests in Morocco. She complained at Washington that Germany's attitude was too unyielding and sought to discover a compromise which would be generally acceptable. But of President Roosevelt's attitude we must speak at greater length. For it was very different from what it had been in 1905, and the difference has perplexed historians.

A determined foe of Delcassé's policy, he alone, among the rulers of the great Powers, had supported the German Emperor's demand that the question of Morocco should be submitted to an international conference. Now, in 1906, through his representative at Algeciras he became the opponent of German intransigence whose intervention finally compelled the German Government to capitulate on the fundamental question of the gendarmerie. How are we to explain this change of front? By the change in the diplomatic situation during the interval. In 1904, the Japanese victories, following so close upon the conclusion of her treaty with England and the signature of the Anglo-French agreement, had seemed to make Britain the arbiter of world politics. In 1905 the treaty of peace between Russia and Japan had been signed in the United States under the ægis of the President, who had been supported by German diplomacy, and on the other hand it was with his support that the Emperor William had annulled that portion of the Anglo-French agreement which concerned Morocco. Therefore, when 1906 opened it was no longer King Edward who was overlord of the world, but the Emperor William and President Roosevelt. But Roosevelt had not humbled King Edward in 1905 to minister to the Emperor William's conceit; to humble the latter monarch in his turn, he wished to make himself if possible the umpire between Germany and France on the question of Morocco. If we would understand the troubled history of these years we must be careful not to classify France among the powers of the first rank. France was simply the greatest among the powers of the second class, by turns beneficiary and victim of the struggle for world hegemony carried on above her head by a small group of giants—England, Germany, and the United States of America. In 1906 we cannot add Russia, for her power was at the moment under eclipse.

The question was therefore finally settled by a compromise. The discussions at the Conference bore chiefly on two points: the institution of a state bank and a gendarmerie. In the matter of the bank France was defeated. She claimed a preponderant share in its control, pleading the amount of French investments in Morocco. She secured only three out of the fourteen seats on the board of directors. In the matter of the gendarmerie, on the other hand, her claims were far more successful. Germany proposed an international gendarmerie, to be organized by the Sultan under the control of the diplomatic corps. France had the wisdom to put forward from the very beginning an extremely moderate proposal. The gendarmerie should be confined to the eight open ports of Morocco and not entrusted to France alone but divided between Spain and herself. Germany refused, as she refused when Italy proposed that the Franco-Spanish gendarmerie should be placed under the control of some neutral power. But when Roosevelt adopted the Italian proposal she suddenly changed her tone and accepted a compromise put forward by Austria at her suggestion, that the policing of certain ports should be entrusted to France, of others to Spain, and at Casablanca to a neutral power, whose chief representative should have the right to inspect the French and Spanish gendarmerie in other ports. It was now the turn of France to refuse and be blamed for her intransigence by London and Petersburg. But Roosevelt intervened a second time, and more francophil than Grey and his subordinates, rejected the policing of one port by a third power. For the second time Germany submitted. Nevertheless the argument Roosevelt brought forward against the Austrian compromise was a double-edged sword. To give the policing of certain ports to France, of others to Spain, and of one port to a neutral power was, he argued, the first step towards a partition of Morocco, and therefore a threat to the sovereignty of the Sultan. But for the same reason he must condemn at the same time the Franco-Spanish proposal that the gendarmerie should be French in some ports, Spanish in others. In every port there must be a force of mixed nationality, French and Spanish. France however persisted in her claim and since she had now the unreserved support of England and Russia and since Roosevelt did not wish to appear in any respect less francophil than England, he yielded, though with bad grace. For the third time Germany gave way.

By the terms of the final agreement the inspector, who was to be Swiss, would not command in any port. At Tangier and Casablanca the gendarmerie would be a mixed force, French and Spanish. At Larache it would be Spanish, French at Rabat, Safi, Mazagan, and Mogador. When compared with the gains France had expected from the agreement of 1904, this was little. When compared with the losses Germany had expected to inflict upon her it was a great deal. It was the first instalment of that Franco-Spanish occupation of the coast of Morocco England had sanctioned in 1904.[1]

5

May we then regard the question of Morocco as finally settled after these twelve troublous months? In Morocco friction continued between the French and Germans until the French army occupied Casablanca in 1907, and as a result of the occupation the Sultan Abdul Aziz was overthrown by a national rising and replaced by Abdul Hamid. And on the other hand did the agreement do anything to diminish the rivalry between England and Germany on all the seas of the globe? British naval and military circles were so sensitive that the least incident was sufficient to arouse indignation and alarm. Were the Germans carrying on in their colony of South-West Africa a difficult campaign against a native revolt? It was a mere pretext. They had designs on the British possessions in that part of the world.[2] Did a German company negotiate with the Portuguese Government the purchase of land in Madeira for the construction of a sanatorium, another obtain a concession from the Spanish Government for a cable

[1] For the Conference of Algeciras see, in the first place, André Tardieu, *La Conférence d'Algésiras: Histoire diplomatique de la Crise marocaine* (15 Janvier–7 Avril 1906), a work very indiscreet at the time of publication, and very informative, but the polemics of a contemporary too closely mixed up with the events he relates for the historian to make uncontrolled use of his statements. The book has also lost its importance since its revelations have been verified and completed by the important German and English diplomatic publications (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxii—*British Documents* . . . vol. iii, pp. 204 sqq.). For the part played by Roosevelt and his representative at Algeciras, Henry White, the American Ambassador in Rome, see J. B. Bishop, *Theodore Roosevelt and His Time*, 1920, vol. i, pp. 488 sqq.; also Allen Nevins, *Henry White, Thirty Years of American Diplomacy*, 1930, pp. 261 sqq.

[2] H. of C., July 31, 1906, Lyttleton's speech (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxii, p. 757). Sir Percy FitzPatrick's address to the members of the Empire Parliamentary Association, July 9, 1919 (Sir John A. R. Marriott, *The Mechanism of the Modern State* . . . vol. i, p. 259 *n.*). Sir C. Hardinge to Sir Edward Grey, August 16, 1906 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iii, p. 367).

passing through the Canaries? The German navy, of course, was seeking a base for its cruisers. It was evident that the Anglo-French *entente* had not been weakened. Contrary to German hopes, Algeciras had proved that the *entente*, far from being the caprice of a cabinet or party was based on the facts of the international situation and therefore remained as firm under a Liberal Government as it had been when the Conservatives were in office.

Nevertheless, neither the two months during which the Conference was in session nor the months which followed it were a period of war fever. The British had just emerged from a struggle which at the outset they had regarded as nothing more than a punitive expedition of the colonial type, but which had ended by attaining or almost attaining the scale of a great war. Some had even been afraid it would expand into a European war. At no price would they incur a similar risk. This was the fundamental significance of the January election. They wished to put war out of their minds and they succeeded. During the Conference at Algeciras an occasional article expressed the opinion of the leading English newspapers in favour of France, but in the interval a host of other questions concerning domestic politics occupied their readers' attention, at a time when the first session opened of a Parliament whose aspect was almost revolutionary. When the Conference had closed with results not very satisfactory to the German foreign office, England made it clear that while she wished to maintain 'the *entente cordiale*,' she would do nothing that would give it a too openly anti-German aspect. London, which during the Conference had sent her county councilllors on an official visit to Paris, gave a cordial reception during the following summer to a delegation of German journalists and a delegation of German burgomasters. King Edward, after an official visit to President Fallières at the beginning of May, stopped in August at Homburg on his way to Wiesbaden to pay William II the visit of a relative and friend. These manifestations of friendly feeling between England and Germany alarmed certain political circles in France.[1] Not so many years before England had been

[1] Their mistrust had already found expression during the Conference at Algeciras, especially when the British Government differed from the French in its attitude towards the compromise proposed by Austria. See two despatches from Sir Francis Bertie to Sir Edward Grey of March 15, 1906 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iii, p. 306). For its persistence see Sir Edward Grey to Sir Francis Bertie, July 9, 1906; Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey, July 12, 1906; C. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey, August 31, 1906 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iii, pp. 361, 362, 374).

virtually the ally of Germany against France. Might not that time return? But these fears were as superficial as they were ill-founded. The predominant sentiment in France, as in England, was the desire for peace almost at any price. Of this Delcassé's fall in June 1905 had been a striking proof. The French had feared lest England's friendship for France might force her into an armed struggle with Germany. After that, how could France be genuinely alarmed to see England remove what she regarded as her greatest danger by entertaining, side by side with the *entente cordiale*, as friendly relations with Germany as the situation permitted? Moreover, many signs proved that French feeling had changed very little since the previous June. The Chamber expressed the profound indifference of the nation to the question which was being discussed at Algeciras by overthrowing the Rouvier Cabinet at one of the most critical moments of the Conference, on a question of domestic policy. The general election which followed a few weeks later was almost as sensational as the British election of January. It resulted in the rout, almost the total annihilation, of the party which represented a bellicose patriotism. Paris therefore did nothing to encourage the French in Morocco to adopt an aggressive attitude. Clémenceau, who became Prime Minister in October, an old opponent of colonial expansion, was perfectly sincere when he informed the German Ambassador that Morocco left him 'completely indifferent'.[1] If, however, it was obvious to everybody that the French Government and Parliament had not the least wish for incidents to occur in Morocco, and in no case could conceivably provoke them, incidents which might nevertheless take place would lose much of their gravity.

6

The new foreign policy inaugurated by the Foreign Office at the end of 1902 and to which even after the change of government it had remained faithful, and the nation with it, has appeared in our account of Algeciras as simply a policy of friendship with France and the Latin nations. But the reconciliation with France had still to be completed by a reconciliation with Russia. In

[1] Prince Radolin to Prince von Bülow, March 15, 1907 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxiii, p. 547).

fact, the Foreign Office had done everything in its power to reach an understanding, not only with France, but also with Russia from 1895, when Lord Salisbury took office, till 1898. But the Russian occupation of Port Arthur in March 1898 had brought the negotiations with Russia to a sudden end and it was then that England had made the advances which Germany had rejected so arrogantly. When the policy of an Anglo-German *entente* failed, those politicians who about 1901 first perceived the necessity of finding Continental allies against Germany thought first of Russia, and it was because there seemed no hope of success in that direction that they turned in despair to France. Unfortunately the *entente cordiale* had hardly been achieved when it led to the Tangier episode and Delcassé's fall, humiliations of France and almost equally of Great Britain. To what did the Wilhelmstrasse owe this success? Surely to the fact that Russia, weakened by its defeat in the Far East, had left France defenceless before the threat of a German invasion?[1] Was it not a matter of vital importance to court Russia once more? Since the day must come, five or ten years hence, when she would have recovered from the disasters that had befallen her, must not England take steps to assure that she would not be, as so often in the past, her enemy, but her friend, and form an alliance between France, Russia, and herself sufficiently strong to put a stop to this German bullying?

The task was far from easy. The renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance had strengthened Russian dislike of England, and if no one in London had discovered the secret of the Bjorköe interview, the French diplomatists, now friends of the Foreign Office, brought Sir Edward Grey disquieting reports of the favourable attitude of Lamsdorff and Witte towards the project of a Continental combination against Britain.[2] But the more alarming these reports, the more pressing the need to take action, and perhaps the weakness of Russia at the close of 1905 was actually favourable to the opening of negotiations. Now that British imperialism had become more pliable, the same might be expected of Russian.[3]

[1] Memorandum by Sir Edward Grey, February 20, 1906; and the accompanying notes by Sir C. Hardinge (*British Documents* . . . vol. iii, p. 267), also a minute bearing Grey's signature of September 18, 1906 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iii, p. 389).

[2] Sir Charles Hardinge to the Marquess of Lansdowne, October 4, 8, 14, 21, 1905; the Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie, October 25, 1905 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iv, pp. 205, 208, 211, 214, 217).

[3] Lieutenant-Colonel Napier to Sir A. Nicolson, April 27, 1907: '. . . she is still smarting from the Japanese defeat that we were the indirect means of inflicting upon her, and the

Lord Lansdowne had been putting out feelers for several weeks when the Unionist Cabinet resigned, but official negotiations were not opened until December 1905. The *rapprochement* with Russia was the achievement of Sir Edward Grey and the Foreign Office during the first eighteen months of the new Government.

When Sir Charles Hardinge agreed to leave the embassy at Petersburg to become permanent under-secretary at Downing Street, it was because he believed that in that capacity he could do more to promote an understanding with Russia.[1] He was succeeded by Sir Arthur Nicolson, who having worked hard at Tangier, Madrid and Algeciras to promote the *rapprochement* with France went to Petersburg to continue there the same anti-German policy. He was accompanied by Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace. Sir Donald had been King Edward's agent at Algeciras. Speaking Russian fluently and with a thorough knowledge of the country, he became the counsellor and guide of the new ambassador, who might otherwise have been at a loss in surroundings so completely strange. The more so that he arrived in the midst of a revolution. After long months filled with repeated risings brutally repressed the first Duma met. A new cabinet was appointed to meet it in which Lamsdorff was replaced by another minister for foreign affairs, Isvolsky. The British, well satisfied with Lamsdorff, with whom they had concluded in January by word of mouth a species of 'tacit agreement', an accord between the foreign policies of the two powers,[2] were afraid that Isvolsky might prove more open to German influences.[3] The hopes of the Germans, exceedingly displeased by the Russian attitude at the Algeciras Conference, rose in proportion to the English fears.[4]

loss of prestige of an unsuccessful war coupled with the revolutionists at home has evidently greatly shaken her hold upon her Central Asian Mohammedan subjects and it is of the greatest importance that we should take advantage of this frame of mind' (*British Documents* . . . vol. iv, p. 532).

[1] Sir Charles Hardinge to Sir Arthur Nicolson, September 4, 1907: '. . . I felt that I could do more by impressing my views on people at home, and I promised both Lamsdorff and the Emperor that I would do my level best to bring it about [an agreement with Russia]' (*British Documents* . . . vol. v, p. 580).

[2] Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey, September 1, 1906: '. . . Mr. Isvolsky observed that he wished to act in harmony with the spirit of what he termed the "tacit agreement" of January last' (*British Documents* . . . vol. iv, p. 386). For the tacit agreement itself see Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey, January 26, 1906 (*British Documents* ' . . vol. iv., p. 223).

[3] Sir A. Johnstone to Sir Edward Grey, Copenhagen, May 27, 1906 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iv, p. 235). See, however, the reassuring account communicated by Léon Bourgeois of his conversation with Isvolsky at Paris in April (Reginald Lister to Sir Edward Grey, May 21, 1906; *British Documents* . . . vol. iii, p. 356).

[4] Von Schön to Prince von Bülow, May 14, 1906 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxii, pp.

But the former were speedily reassured, the latter disappointed. Isvolsky, who, the first perhaps among the agents of the Russian Government, had received King Edward's confidence at Copenhagen in 1904, showed himself from the outset determined upon a policy of understanding with England. The negotiations for the conclusion of an Anglo-Russian *entente* on the same lines as the *entente* concluded with France in April 1904, continued without interruption and from November were actively pressed forward. They led to the convention of August 31, 1907. They had proved a more difficult task than the Anglo-French negotiations. This is easily understood when we remember the many conflicts of interest and opinion which divided the two countries.

In Russia the pro-British party was the Liberal party, the party which supported the revolution. All its sympathies lay with the three countries of Western Europe—England, France and Italy—where parliamentary government was established, and which, moreover, were drawing so closely together. If Isolvsky, the foreign minister, was in favour of an agreement with England, it was because at home he supported a liberal policy of loyal co-operation with the Duma. To all these groups of the left Germany was an object of hatred. William II was accused of encouraging the weak Nicholas II to adopt a policy of reaction. When the Duma was dissolved in July 1906, the Government thought it prudent to guard the German embassy with troops.[1] It was afraid it might be sacked by a mob of rioters. On the other hand the party of reaction was pro-German. The reconciliation between England and France, Russia's official ally, far from producing an immediate *rapprochement* with England accentuated at first the hostility entertained towards France in military circles. These circles cherished the hope that the old project of an alliance between the three Emperors might be revived. Russia had learned by bitter experience the cost of war, defeat, disaster and revolution. The efforts of the Panslavists to break up the Austro-Hungarian monarchy should therefore be discouraged. And the

22–4). Count von Metternich to Prince von Bülow, July 31, 1906 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxi[II], p. 448). See on the other hand Count Henckel's report of May 17, 1906 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxii, p. 23). For the uncertainty felt in London see Von Stumm's ambiguous despatch to Prince von Bülow, May 19, 1906 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxii, pp. 24–6).

[1] Or rather, fearing a hostile demonstration against the German Embassy and not wishing to single out this particular Embassy for protction it had them all guarded (Alexander Isvolsky, *Memoirs*, p. 208).

Russian Emperor should accede to the alliance between the German and the Austrian Emperors. Peace would be assured, directly in Eastern and Central Europe, indirectly throughout the entire Continent by this revived Holy Alliance, this league of three monarchs against the danger of popular insurrection.

In England it was just the opposite. If the imperialists—whether they belonged to the Unionist or the Liberal party—objected to particular concessions to Russia the Foreign Office found it politic to make, they were taken as a whole, obsessed by fear of the German fleet, stronger every year and stationed at the very gates of Britain, and in their anxiety to possess an ally sufficiently powerful to intimidate Germany were seriously troubled by the collapse of Russia, which a few years previously they had so eagerly desired. Among the advanced Liberals on the other hand, in spite of their indifference to the expansion of the British Empire in Asia, the prospect of a *rapprochement* with Russia was greeted with an outburst of indignation. To be sure they sympathised with the Russian people. But they witnessed their impotence to overthrow the Czar, and after, as before, 1905, Russia was incarnate in a Government they abhorred, which completely stifled all freedom of thought and massacred the workers and the Jews. Their denunciations not only filled the Radical press but found utterance in the House of Commons itself. To enter into friendly relations with the Russian Government was to give the latter British support in the struggle against the revolution, to assist the cause of reaction in Russia and indirectly throughout the entire Continent.

From this source countless difficulties arose. At the opening of 1906 the Russian ministers asked King Edward to pay a visit to the Czar. Either they wished to give some pledge to Liberal opinion or hoped to compromise the King by the support to the cause of order his visit would appear to give. From every point of view the proposed visit was dangerous, and he declined the invitation.[1] Instead Sir Edward Grey suggested that the British fleet should visit Cronstadt. This time it was the Russian Government which asked the British to postpone the proposed visit.[2] The same year the Inter-Parliamentary Union was to hold its Congress in London and for the first time a Russian delegation would be

[1] Sir Sidney Lee, *King Edward VII* . . . vol. ii, pp. 564–5. Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey, January 16, March 15, 1906 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iv, pp. 221, 227).

[2] Sir Sidney Lee, ibid, p. 565.

present, since Russia at last possessed a Parliament. But on the very day, July 23, that Campbell-Bannerman, as Prime Minister, was to give the Congress an official welcome the news arrived that the Czar had dissolved the Duma. '*Je ne fais pas de commentaires*,' declared Sir Henry, who spoke in French,[1] '*sur les nouvelles qui ont éclaté ce matin, ce n'est ni le lieu ni le moment. Nous n'avons pas une assez grande connaissance des faits pour pouvoir blamer ou louer. Mais ceci du moins nous pouvons dire—nous qui fondons notre confiance et notre espoir sur le régime parlementaire. Les nouvelles institutions ont souvent une jeunesse accidentée sinon orageuse. La Douma revivra d'une forme ou d'une autre. Nous pouvons dire avec toute sincérité: La Douma est morte. Vive La Douma.*'[2] The Russian court took offence, and the Russian ambassador protested. Sir Henry was obliged to explain, almost excuse, his words.

During the following months the Russian Government strengthened its authority. The Stolypin cabinet, formed after the *coup d'état* of July, seemed likely to last and displayed a measure of energy and consistency both in repressing disorder and in carrying out some useful measures of social reform. The visit of two Russian men-of-war to Portsmouth in the spring of 1907, followed by a visit of the crews to London, proved that war and revolution had not completely annihilated the Russian navy and was a sign of the friendly relations which now existed between the two Governments. Since Isvolsky remained at the Russian foreign office the negotiations for an agreement were pushed forward, the more actively since the Russian cabinet offered firmer guarantees of stability. On August 31 the Convention was signed. Both for its positive contents and its omissions, and for the reception it met with in both countries, it merits detailed examination.[3]

[1] J. A. Spender, *The Life of the Right Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*, vol. ii, p. 264.

[2] 'I do not propose to comment on the sudden news received this morning. This is neither the place nor the time. We do not know the facts sufficiently for blame or approval. But this at least we can say—who base our confidence and our hope on parliamentary government. New institutions have often a chequered, if not a stormy, youth. Under one form or another the Duma will revive. In all sincerity we can say "the Duma is dead, long live the Duma".'

[3] For the Anglo-Russian Convention see *British Documents* . . . vol. iv, pp. 232 sqq. (See also *Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxvi, pp. 1 sqq.) There is nothing on the subject in Isvolsky's (unfinished) memoirs. Nothing either in Witte's, who, however, was no longer in office after May 1906 and whose sole interest before that date in a *rapprochement* with England was to obtain a loan from the English banks. There is only the following bitter comment of a dismissed minister: 'The Convention inaugurated the policy of philandering with England. . . . It was due to my opposition that it was not concluded until 1907' (*Memoirs*, pp. 432–3).

7

The preamble of the Convention laid down that its purpose was to settle by mutual agreement certain questions relative to the interests of the signatories on the continent of Asia, and 'the removal of every cause of dispute between Great Britain and Russia in respect of the aforesaid questions'. It comprised three sections, 'an agreement concerning Persia', 'a convention concerning Afghanistan', and 'an agreement concerning Tibet'.[1]

The agreement concerning Tibet and the Convention concerning Afghanistan dealt with the northern frontier of India. The imperialist school wanted England, in order to safeguard India against the danger of a Russian invasion, to cross the Himalayas and establish to the north a series of 'bulwarks' or 'glacis' against an enemy considered so dangerous. On this point Lord Curzon and Lord Kitchener, however they might dispute the limits of their respective jurisdictions, were agreed. The new Viceroy, Lord Minto, adopted the views common to the entire Anglo-Indian world, and King Edward was of the same opinion. But the Russo-Japanese war had changed the face of Asia. For a long time to come there would be no Russian peril in this region. The Foreign Office had not waited for the advent of the Liberal Government to disavow Lord Curzon's policy in regard to Afghanistan and Tibet. This, no doubt, even more than his quarrel with Lord Kitchener, was the reason of his recall.[2] Morley, therefore, sup-

[1] For the meaning given to these terms 'convention' and 'agreement' see the memorandum drawn up by Isvolsky on August 6, (19,) 1907 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iv, pp. 300–1, 499–500).

[2] On this point see Lord Midleton's revelations in a speech delivered at Guildford on November 20, 1930. The speaker wished to correct mistakes contained in a recent biography of Lord Curzon by reference to confidential statements made to him by Balfour shortly before his death. 'His difficulty with the home Government was that he claimed to direct the foreign policy of India in relation to her neighbours without sufficient regard to its effects on British policy throughout the world. Most unfortunately he felt it necessary to advise operations in Tibet and Afghanistan, which the Russian Government and our ally the Ameer regarded with the greatest anxiety. Mr. Balfour's Cabinet neither shared his fears nor were willing to acquiesce in the strong measures he proposed. It happened that in that body of twenty men all of whom were his admirers and probably at least half were his intimate friends, one and all were unanimous that a crisis must be avoided, and in both cases they unanimously refused to authorize the serious steps which he proposed to take and our successors in office entirely concurred with us.' In spite of Edward VII' s repeated requests neither Balfour at the end of 1905 nor Campbell-Bannerman at the beginning of 1906 would give Lord Curzon the English peerage which would have enabled him to sit in the House of Lords as an inconvenient critic of the Government's policy (Sir Sidney Lee, *King Edward VII* . . . vol. ii, p. 579). He did not obtain it until 1908

ported not only by his colleagues, but also by the Committee of Imperial Defence, had no difficulty in overcoming Anglo-Indian opposition and checking without danger to the Empire the innate tendency of imperialism to a policy of aggrandisement. By the terms of the Convention of 1907 Russia recognized Afghanistan 'as outside the Russian sphere of influence', and undertook not to send diplomatic agents to that country but to negotiate with it through the channel of the British Government. In return England pledged herself not to interfere in the domestic government of Afghanistan so long as the latter respected the pledges she had given to England not to annex any portion of Afghan territory and to maintain equal commercial rights for both countries, any privilege secured for British or Anglo-Indian trade to accrue automatically to Russian. As regards Tibet both Governments promised to abstain from any interference with the domestic affairs of the country, to send no representatives to Lhassa, or seek any concessions, such as railways, roads, telegraphs, or mines, either for themselves or for their subjects. Even the despatch of a scientific expedition by either of the two Governments should be subject to the consent of the other. Protests were raised in Russia against the Afghan Convention, because it recognized England's established right of exclusive control over the foreign policy of Afghanistan. Protests were made in London by a section of the Conservative opposition against the Tibetan agreement. For when Lord Curzon was Viceroy England had despatched a military expedition to Tibet and imposed upon her a quasi-protectorate in which China had just acquiesced, and the fruits of these successes were now surrendered. But this portion at least of the Convention was loudly applauded by the Radical press; the cost of the Indian army could now be reduced.

That part of the Convention which concerned Persia met with a far more mixed reception in Russia and still more in England. Persia was one of those half-civilized, half-barbarous countries which were attempting to raise themselves to the European level, getting into debt as a result of their ill-advised efforts, and as they piled up their indebtedness becoming the mark and finally the prey of their creditors' greed. Russia had already laid hands on

when the Government had no more reason to refuse him this gratification of his personal ambition since he had just entered the House of Lords as a representative Irish peer (see the letter to the Irish peers offering himself as candidate, December 27, 1907).

the northern portion of the country and intended to extend her grasp to the Persian Gulf, where one day, if she recovered her strength, she might find that open port she had lost in Port Arthur. Here, however, she was faced by the ambitions both of Germany, who was extending in this direction her railway from Bagdad, and of England, who, as mistress of the seas, regarded herself as entitled to exercise suzerainty over the coast of the Gulf. How could an agreement be achieved on this point between England and Russia? Russia wanted two vertical zones of influence, the eastern of the two Russian, the western British. The Persian coast of the Gulf would be divided between both. England wanted two horizontal zones, the southern, which would be British, would include the entire Persian coast of the Gulf. But the British Government, not daring to put forward this claim, proposed the compromise on which the agreement was based. The two powers agreed to divide Persia into three zones.[1] In the northern zone, which included Teheran, England would leave Russian influence a free field. In the southern, or rather the south-eastern, zone, which ran from a line drawn from the Afghan frontier to Bender-Abbas, on the coast, Russia would leave England a free hand. In the intermediate zone, which comprised the entire Persian coast of the Gulf, England and Russia mutually undertook not to prevent the grant of concessions to the subjects of either power without a preliminary agreement between both.[2] The British Government, with the support or rather under the pressure of the Government of India, attempted to insert in the agreement a formula by which Russia recognized England's 'special interests' in the Persian Gulf. But the attempt was defeated by the refusal of the Russian Government, which maintained that, since this was a problem which concerned other nations besides Great Britain and Russia, it had no place in a bilateral agreement. There were moments during the summer of 1907 when this difference

[1] In the document they were careful not to term these zones 'spheres of influence' or even 'of interest' so as to avoid the appearance of violating the sovereignty of Persia at a moment when in the preamble of this very agreement both powers pledged themselves 'to respect' her 'integrity and independence'. See Sir Edward Grey to Sir Arthur Nicolson, October 31, 1906; Sir Arthur Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey, November 4, 1906 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iv, pp. 407, 409).

[2] Grey had wanted a special arrangement for Teheran, the capital of the entire country. See the minute signed by Sir Charles Hardinge, February 26, 1907 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iv, p. 433). But he abandoned the claim almost immediately in return for guarantees given to British interests in the neutral zone—Sir Edward Grey to Sir Arthur Nicolson, March 8, 1907 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iv, pp. 43–5).

seemed likely to bring the negotiations to an end. Sir Arthur Nicolson found himself obliged to visit London, apparently to urge counsels of moderation on his Government. Finally England gave way. All that Sir Edward Grey was able to secure was the publication, at the same time as the agreement, of a letter from himself to Nicolson, in which, after recalling the existence of special rights in the Gulf guaranteed to England by their exercise for more than a century, he pointed out that during these negotiations the Russian Government had implicitly recognized these rights and expressed his belief that 'this question will not give rise to difficulties between the two Governments' if it should ever prove necessary to raise it. This did not satisfy the uncompromising imperialists in England. And in Russia on the other hand complaints were raised that she obtained by the agreement nothing she did not possess already. But both sides were so weary and Russia so exhausted that these complaints found little echo.[1] In England it was the Radical group, a powerful section of the ministerialists, who regarded the convention as committing the British Government to an enterprise closely resembling the French enterprise in Morocco, and to a dismemberment of Persia to be effected in concert with a Government which was the sworn foe of freedom and civilization.

8

When, in May 1906, the *Standard* revealed to its readers for the first time the secret that England was seeking an agreement with Russia, the paper informed them that the question of the Bagdad railway would be among those discussed.[2] And when the *Daily Telegraph*, in September, made further revelations, often true even in detail, the article, after representing the Tibetan question as on the point of settlement and admitting that the negotiations on the subject of Persia would be far more difficult, added: 'In time, and

[1] As early as 1903 Valentine Chirol one of the principal architects of the *entente cordiale* wrote as follows: 'Are we to run the risk of seeing Eastern Persia converted into another Manchuria, with a military railway on the Manchurian model, running down to another Port Arthur on the Gulf or on the Indian Ocean, and turning the flank of Afghanistan and British Baluchistan, or are we to draw a line at which by mutual consent or otherwise, Russia's policy of peaceful penetration from the north shall be met by a British policy of peaceful penetration?' (*The Middle Eastern Question, or some Political Problems of Indian Defence*, p. 404).

[2] May 19, 1906.

doubtless very soon, the question of the Near East will be reached, and I may say, without laying claim to the gift of prophecy, that when it is disposed of, Russian warships will no longer be excluded from the Dardanelles.'[1] Nevertheless, the Convention of August 31, 1907, contained no mention either of Asia Minor or Turkey in Europe. On these points an agreement, or at least a public agreement, was so difficult to reach that silence had been found preferable.

At Constantinople England continued to follow the complicated policy she had pursued for more than a century. On the one hand by constituting herself protector of the Christian populations oppressed by the Sultan she continued to augment her prestige in a way which served her honour and interests at the same time. On the other hand she shrank from weakening the Sultan's power to such an extent as to strengthen Russian influence on the Bosphorus, for she was afraid that Russia might one day occupy Constantinople and restore the old Byzantine empire. But the appearance of a new factor had made her policy more difficult. At the period of the Crimean War, Germany did not exist. In 1878, Germany, still new-born, had not yet entered upon a policy of expansion and Bismarck had expressed the sentiments of the entire nation when he declared that Macedonia was not worth the life of a Pomeranian grenadier. In the interval the situation had changed. Throughout the Mohammedan world Germany was pursuing a policy which though, as we know to-day, destined to fail, appeared at the time clever and cautious. German imperialism sought no annexations. It offered its protection to the native monarchs in return for compensations of a purely economic nature—banking, railway, or mining concessions. In this way Germany had made herself extremely popular at Fez, as a bulwark against French or Spanish imperialism, at Teheran as a bulwark against Russian or British, and again at Constantinople as a defence against the Russians and still more against the English.

Of this policy of peaceful penetration the Bagdad railway was the principal achievement. When the Anglo-Russian negotiations opened at Petersburg, the first section from Konieh to Eregli had just been opened. When the second section had been completed and the line taken across the Taurus the construction

[1] *Daily Telegraph*, September 29, 1906, 'England and Russia. An Understanding on Asiatic Policy'. Persia and Tibet. Petersburg, September 25.

of the remaining section over a vast plain to Mosul would be an easy task. If it were carried further still the railway would reach the Persian frontier, and German trade and finance were already engaged in a systematic attempt to obtain a footing in Persia. There was a German bank at Teheran, a German line of shipping in the Persian Gulf. The negotiators of the Anglo-Russian Convention were therefore obliged to deal with the problem of Bagdad. On the Russian side Isvolsky proposed that by a friendly agreement the German railways in Mesopotamia should be linked up with the system of railways which Russia was constructing in northern Persia. Sir Edward Grey was disturbed by the German project of extending the line to Koweit on the Persian Gulf. Would Germany agree that from Bagdad or at least from Bassora traffic should proceed by water in vessels owned by a British line? Or that the final section of railway from Bassora to Koweit should be built and worked by England? Or alternatively that the entire line should be placed under the management of an international board? Negotiations followed. Germany indeed could not refuse to negotiate, for she knew that the undertaking could be completed only with the help of British and French capital, and that it would not be forthcoming without the sanction of Downing Street and the Quai d'Orsay. But the negotiations failed both between Germany and Russia, and Germany and England. They failed because the German Government insisted that the undertaking should remain altogether, or at least preponderantly, German. And they failed for another reason—because Germany was afraid that their success would endanger her credit with the Sultan. He was convinced that England, mistress of Egypt and India, was preparing to embark upon a further project of aggrandisement, nothing less than to unite these two possessions by annexation of all the intervening territory. He looked to a German Bagdad to plant itself in this territory as a barrier blocking the road against this new advance of British imperialism.[1]

As regards European Turkey, Isvolsky, hostile as he was to the Asiatic policy the Russian empire had pursued for the last twenty years and anxious to see Russia once more turn her face towards Europe, might be expected to revive the question of the Dardanelles. Russia had just lost Port Arthur. Might she not obtain by friendly agreement with England, if not a port in the Persian

[1] For these negotiations see *Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxvi, pp. 175 sqq.

Gulf, at least a free passage for her navy into the Mediterranean? It was with this object in view that he regularly supported the English standpoint at Constantinople, whether in the matter of an international gendarmerie in Roumelia or of the higher tariff the Porte wished to impose? Though British commerce protested against the latter England consented. But if in concert with Germany the Porte demanded this higher tariff, it was to finance the Bagdad railway. And England gave her consent on the express stipulation that the money it yielded should be spent in Roumelia.[1] She thus contrived while satisfying the demands of British humanitarianism to put an obstacle in the way of German expansion in Mesopotamia. But on the question of the Dardanelles no agreement was reached.

It seems in fact that the original conception entertained at Petersburg of an *entente* with Great Britain was an agreement about the Straits. This once achieved, it would be easy to reach an understanding on the questions at issue between the two countries in Asia.[2] But false reports, circulated by German agents at Constantinople and deliberately intended to make the negotiations difficult by bringing up the question of the Dardanelles, warned both the English and the Russians of the dangers involved, and for months those in charge of the negotiations on both sides tacitly agreed not to raise it. Isvolsky, knowing England's traditional attitude on the question, shrank from the risk of a refusal. In fact, circumstances had changed more than he realized. At the beginning of 1903 Balfour, in a report submitted to the Committee of Imperial Defence, had stated that a passage of the Russian fleet from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean would no longer endanger the European balance of power, as would have been the case fifty years earlier.[3] But Grey did not wish to show his hand by raising the question first.[4] When Benckendorff, the Russian ambassador in London, on a visit to Petersburg, attempted to discuss it with Nicolson, the latter replied that the Darda-

[1] *British Documents* . . . vol. v, pp. 168 sqq. *Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxii, pp. 327 *n.*

[2] Spring-Rice to Sir Edward Grey, January 26, 1906: he reports a conversation which he had held with Count Benckendorff (*British Documents* . . . vol. iv, p. 222).

[3] Extract from Defence Committee Paper I B (*Report by Mr. Balfour of the conclusion arrived at on the 11th February in reference to Russia and Constantinople, February 12, 1903.* Quoted in a memorandum by Sir Charles Hardinge, November 16, 1906 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iv, p. 59).

[4] Sir Edward Grey to Sir Arthur Nicolson, November 1906 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iv, p. 414). Minute by Sir Edward Grey following a despatch from Sir Arthur Nicolson, January 30, 1907 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iv, p. 523).

nelles did not come within his instructions.[1] This was tantamount to referring him to Sir Edward Grey. Benckendorff, therefore, on his return to London, informed Grey of the Russian claim that she should have the right to send her men-of-war into the Mediterranean, but the other powers should be not allowed to send theirs into the Black Sea. His astonishment equalled his delight when Grey told him frankly that the British Government had determined to abandon her former policy of closing the Straits to Russia. He added, however, that it could not safely translate this declaration into a public and documentary engagement. It would arouse a storm of indignation in the country. Moreover, Russia and England would act imprudently if they claimed to settle by themselves a question which concerned all the powers.[2] Isolvsky recognized the weight of these arguments. And he returned them against England when the latter wanted a formal document recognizing her 'special interests' in the Persian Gulf. He was content to take note of Grey's declaration, reserving the right to act upon it when circumstances permitted.[3]

9

From all that has been said it is clear in what respects the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 differed from the Anglo-French *entente* of 1904. In both cases the superficial purport was the same, nothing more than the settlement of outstanding colonial questions. But in the former case all, or at least all which presented a serious character, were settled. In the latter some were deliberately passed over and they were precisely those which, to judge from

[1] Sir Arthur Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey, February 10, 1907 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iv, p. 272).

[2] Memorandum by Sir Edward Grey, March 15, 1907; Sir Edward Grey to Sir Arthur Nicolson, March 19, 1907 (*British Documents* . . . vol. iv, pp. 279, 280).

[3] Sir Arthur Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey, March 27, 1907; Note by Sir C. Hardinge, April 2, 1907; Sir Arthur Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey, April 14, 1907; Sir Arthur Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey, communicating a memorandum of Isvolsky's—same date; Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson May 1, 1907, enclosing a memorandum to be submitted to Isvolsky; Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey, July 10, 1907, communicating a memorandum of Isvolsky's; Sir Edward Grey to H. J. O'Beirne, July 31, 1907. In September Isvolsky raised the question of a free passage through the Dardanelles by Russian men-of-war during a series of interviews with Aehrenthal: Baron von Aehrenthal to Prince von Bülow, October 31, 1907 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxii, p. 80). Cf. Prince von Bülow to Baron von Aehrenthal, December 8, 1907; Baron Marschall to Prince von Bülow, December 14, 1907 (ibid., pp. 81 sqq., 83 sqq.).

past experience, were likely to prove serious later on. In the former case the reconciliation was not merely political. Public feeling in both countries became friendly, in spite of the reluctance displayed in certain quarters, particularly in France. In the latter there was nothing of the kind: not a word was heard of an *entente cordiale*. Moreover the Russians were very careful to maintain contact with Germany, to keep her in touch with the negotiations and remove any anxiety she might feel as to the nature of the new relations between England and Russia. Even explicit declarations by German statesmen that they had no objection to raise were insufficient to reassure Isvolsky. He remembered that Bülow had said the same when the agreement between England and France was published in April 1904, and all Europe knew what had followed. This constant anxiety to keep Germany's friendship disturbed the Foreign Office, and its alarm reached a head when, in October 1906, Isvolsky visited Berlin and Paris while excusing himself from a visit to London.[1] The alarm will seem justified when we remember what powerful friends Germany possessed at the Russian court. Many in the Czar's *entourage* resigned themselves to the Convention only because it allowed Russia to liquidate on the most favourable terms possible the vast enterprise of imperial expansion in Asia which was on the verge of failure, made it easier for her to obtain from the West the money necessary for her recovery and left her perfectly free later on when she regained her strength to pursue whatever policy she might choose.[2] Like the war itself, the policy which led up to it had its two fronts, an eastern and a western, distinct from each other and very imperfectly linked.

Nevertheless Germany had cause for anxiety. The more so since

[1] *British Documents* . . . vol. iv, pp. 243 sqq. Even in the summer of 1907 when the Convention was ready for signature the British representative at Munich, Cartwright, could write to his Government on August 7: 'The dream of reconstituting the Alliance between the three Emperors undoubtedly exists in some quarters. . . . The part that Monsieur Isvolsky may play in bringing this about is still uncertain, but he is generally credited with not being adverse to Russia following such a course. . . . If one is to believe what one hears Monsieur Isvolsky's sympathies lean more towards Germany than towards France' (*British Documents* . . . vol. vi, p. 41).

[2] In 'September 1907 Russia and Great Britain concluded a treaty relating to Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet. The convention inaugurated the policy of philandering with England. Since we did not give up our traditional flirting with Germany, the situation became rather ambiguous. At present we are trying to adjust ourselves to it by assuring Germany that of course we love her best and that we are flirting with England merely for appearance's sake, while to England we say the reverse. I believe we shall soon have to pay for this duplicity' (*Memoirs of Count Witte*, p. 432).

the Convention was preceded by the conclusion of two treaties of friendship between France and Japan and between Russia and Japan. These two treaties, of which the former was signed on June 10, the second on July 30, had presumably been concluded under the auspices of the Foreign Office. Nor was this all. On June 16 the text was published of two declarations couched in identical terms and exchanged respectively on May 16 between England and Spain, and France and Spain, which undertook to maintain the territorial *status quo* in the Mediterranean and that portion of the Atlantic which washed the coasts of Europe and Africa,[1] and the rumour was current that a secret pact of the same kind had been concluded between England and Germany's official ally, Italy. Germany determined to reply to these agreements by another to be concluded with Russia, Sweden, and Denmark for the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Baltic and, to make the agreement possible, obtained from France and England a renunciation of the right of control over the Baltic won by their joint victories in the Crimean War. Though the French Government consented, because it did not wish to refuse a request of its Russian ally, it was a very grudging consent. But when Germany sought to push her advantage further and proposed an agreement between England, Denmark, Sweden, Holland and Belgium for the maintenance of the *status quo* in the North Sea, Sir Edward Grey insisted that France should be included, as mistress of Dunkirk.[2] German policy had missed

[1] We know today the complete history of these agreements. In 1898 England had attempted to force upon Spain an alliance, directed against France, which would have amounted to a naval and military control of Spain by England. When in June 1905 the King of Spain visited the King of England Lord Lansdowne made a similar but far more moderate suggestion for an alliance, to be directed this time against Germany. Sir Arthur Nicolson, British Ambassador at Madrid, communicated Lord Lansdowne's proposal to Jules Cambon, the French Ambassador. The brothers Cambon took it up and transformed it eighteen months later (December 1906) into a project for an agreement between France, England, and Spain to maintain the *status quo*. The proposal met with a hostile reception in London, since the British Government did not desire to make the negotiation of the Anglo-Russian agreement more difficult by negotiating another anti-German pact. Finally, as the result it would seem of the visit which Edward VII paid to Carthagena in April accompanied by Sir Charles Hardinge, England put forward the suggestion which was accepted by the French and Spanish Governments of two agreements to be drawn up in identical terms and signed simultaneously, between England and Spain on the one hand, between France and Spain on the other (*British Documents* . . . vol. vii, pp. 1 sqq.; especially pp. 1–3, 6–9, 21–2). This is an instance in which the application of their new policy led Sir Edward Grey and the Foreign Office a little further than they had intended to go.

[2] The two agreements were signed at Berlin on April 23, 1908. For the circumstances under which they were concluded see Viscount Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty-Five Years 1892-1916*, vol. i, pp. 143 sqq.; *Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxiii[II], pp. 400 sqq.

its mark. Germany was obliged to content herself with the Baltic agreement, a very feeble reply to so many achievements of British diplomacy which she could not but regard as manifestations of hostility towards herself. All or almost all the nations of the world had concluded agreements with one another; Germany was left in isolation.

Agreements, no doubt, not 'alliances'. But with an indiscreet jubilation a section of the Parisian press represented the agreements between France, England, and Spain as amounting to nothing short of an alliance,[1] and an English Conservative organ betrayed the secret wishes of one section at least of the public by announcing the signature of the Anglo-Russian Convention as the conclusion of a 'treaty' and the formation of an 'alliance'.[2] Moreover, the Convention had hardly been signed when a series of visits to Russia by officers of the British staff began—visits without precedent in history. General French visited Russia in the autumn of 1907, General Ian Hamilton the following spring.[3] And these visits were paid at a time when it was being rumoured on the Continent that a military convention had been secretly concluded between France and England, and that the staffs of both countries had agreed upon the measures to be adopted in the event of a joint campaign against the German army. How much truth was there in this rumour? And if it were well founded,

[1] Von Mühlberg to Prince von Bülow, June 22, 1907: 'I took the opportunity to observe to M. Cambon that even if the contents of the agreements did not directly affect our interests, the manner in which they were staged—publication on the day when The Hague Conference opened, two inaccurate despatches of the Agence Havas, the secrecy with which they were concluded, jubilant utterances in the French Press—could not fail to arouse considerable anxiety in Germany. It was not surprising that such comments as had appeared in the *Matin*, that questions of European policy would be settled without consulting Germany, were ill-received by German opinion. We had taken pains to restrain the language of our Press. The French Press had adopted a different attitude to the transaction from the English. The *Standard* had even pointed out that any attempt to read into the declarations a significance hostile to Germany would be folly' (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxi[II], p. 571).

[2] '. . . A treaty has been concluded. . . . In fact the new Convention perfects and completes the imposing edifice of alliances which now enshrines the peace of the world' (*Daily Telegraph*, September 2, 1907).

[3] Von Miquel to Prince von Bülow, October 9, 1907; note by William II: 'The policy of investment proceeds noiselessly and inevitably in spite of the invitation to Windsor which is a mere blind intended to throw dust in the eyes of fools in both countries.' 'French's mission to Petersburg three weeks before my visit to London is *unprecedented*, the more so since it is well known that no German general has been officially invited to Russia for the last forty or fifty years' (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxv[I], p. 48). A report circulated in Berlin which Reuter's Agency was obliged to contradict that a formal alliance had been concluded between Russia, France, England and Japan (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxv[I], pp. 53 sqq.).

what was the character of the arrangements concluded between the staffs of the two armies? Before answering, we must study as a whole the measures adopted to reorganize the military defences of the United Kingdom by the new minister for war, Richard Burdon Haldane.

II HALDANE AND ARMY REORGANIZATION

I

To understand the bearing of the reforms which Haldane accomplished at the War Office during his seven years as Secretary for War we must know the exact nature of the problem with which the British Government had been faced, since the experiences of the Boer War had compelled it to recognize that a thoroughgoing reform of the army must be effected to prepare for the eventuality either of another war of the same kind or of the European conflict in which it seemed inevitable that England would one day be involved. What pattern should this work of reorganization follow? Here as everywhere else the model nation exercised its attraction. Germany had created an original type of large standing army, an object of alarm to her neighbours, which by summoning to the colours all healthy young men for a period of two or even three years, seemed to combine the advantages of a professional army and a militia. There were indeed many—especially since the Boer War—who wished to see England adopt conscription. But this demand, of considerable strength so long as the war lasted and with which moreover the Government appeared to agree,[1] lost much of its force when peace had been restored and dislike of war and the military profession regained the ascendancy over fear of the enemy and martial enthusiasm.

[1] H. of C., March 8, 1901, Brodrick's speech: '. . . I do not doubt that man for man a voluntary army is better than a conscription army, but man for man a trained army of conscripts is better than an incompletely trained army of volunteers and especially if it happens to outnumber them. Therefore, my adhesion to the voluntary system is strictly limited by our ability to obtain under it a force with which our military authorities can satisfy the Government that they have sufficient force to resist invasion and can maintain it to their satisfaction. At the same time, the Government fully recognize that while the country is willing to pay heavily to escape invasion, it is incumbent on the Government to exhaust every means before coming forward with any such proposals, and especially under the circumstances of the present time' (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. xc, p. 1060).

Moreover, conscription of the Prussian type found very few supporters in England.[1] Those who were regarded as its advocates were usually content to ask for something very different.

Some asked for national training—that is to say, compulsory military exercises during which the men would not be quartered in a barracks or instruction camp. The Webbs, faithful to their principle of combining a Nationalist and Conservative policy with a policy of social reform of a Socialist tendency, advocated that the school age should be raised to seventeen or even eighteen, and military training given in connection with the curriculum. And a system of the same kind was supported by Blatchford, the Socialist jingo.

Others asked for what they called 'national service'. This was the programme of an important league founded in 1903 by Lord Roberts, who, in spite of his protests, was regarded by the public as the champion of 'conscription'. The four years of compulsory military service which he demanded for young men between eighteen and thirty involved nothing more than two months' training in an instruction camp in the first year, a fortnight in the following three.[2] But even in this extremely attenuated form conscription aroused invincible opposition.

This repugnance to compulsory military service was a sentiment of which the vast majority of Englishmen had learned to be proud; it came from the heart of their liberalism. It was in vain that the defenders of conscription pleaded that the system was in no way opposed either to the spirit of Anglo-Saxon civilization, since the Australian Commonwealth had accepted it, or even to the British Constitution, since balloting had been the old method of recruiting the militia, and if the system had long since fallen into desuetude it was only because every year Parliament automatically suspended the Ballot Act. It was equally useless to remind the opponents of conscription that the England of Crécy and Agincourt had known compulsory military service, that Wellington's

[1] Spencer Wilkinson, *Britain at Bay*, 1909, asked for two years of military service for the infantry and artillery, three years for the cavalry and mounted infantry, the men in some cases to remain in the service up to the age of thirty-nine.

[2] *The National Service Journal*, No. 1, November 1903. For schemes of a similar nature see further G. C. Coulton, *A Strong Army in a Free State: A Study of the Old English and Modern Swiss Militia*, 1900. Richard Benett of Liverpool, *Two Million Civilian Soldiers of the Queen*, 1900; Samuel Smith, 'National Defence', a letter in *The Times* and an article from the *Spectator*, March 1, 1902. See further the Utopian and imaginative scheme sketched by Rudyard Kipling in four articles entitled 'The Army of the Dream' (*Morning Post*, June 15, 16, 17, 18, 1904).

troops in part, Nelson's sailors wholly or almost wholly, had been 'conscripts' and that until 1870 the Liberals had been as strongly opposed to compulsory education as to conscription. It was labour lost. These arguments fell on deaf ears, for popular prejudice was stronger than any argument. We must not be deceived by the fact that a number of English Socialists advocated in a modified form a system of conscription. They were but a handful of eccentric individuals. The existing system of voluntary enlistment had no more hearty defenders than the trade unions which detested conscription. The same divergence of outlook became evident whenever the question of the army was discussed at an international Socialist congress. All the Continental Socialists advocated a militia system, the 'nation in arms' in place of an army trained in barracks. But it was in vain that they attempted to persuade the Labour party to accept a programme identical with that which was being advocated by the British Conservatives. Popular prejudice was, moreover, reinforced by the serious financial and even military arguments invoked by the opponents of conscription in support of their instinctive dislike.

In the first place, we must remember that in the case of Great Britain the problem of national defence presented a totally different aspect from that which it possessed in the case of the great Continental Powers. Because the latter were Continental, they were obliged before all else to maintain large standing armies to protect their soil against the possible invasion of their land frontiers. Only when this had been done could they bear the expense, if sufficiently wealthy, of supporting a fleet to increase their prestige on distant seas, annex a colonial empire and protect its communications with the mother country. The United Kingdom, on the contrary, had only maritime frontiers. Its first necessity therefore was a navy, and an army was but a secondary weapon, whether for the defence of the mother country or the annexation and defence of Colonies. Throughout the whole or almost the whole of the nineteenth century the army had indeed cost more than the navy. But this was because of the fact that a professional army, however small, is expensive and that England had only one rival at sea—namely, France, and she was far less formidable than she had been in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From the moment when, towards the close of the century, the number of great naval powers increased, England had

found herself compelled to increase her navy so as to be in a position to meet a possible combination of hostile fleets. The cost of the navy had equalled, then exceeded, the cost of the army. The demands of the South African War had once more increased to a formidable extent the expenditure upon the army. But this was an abnormal and a temporary phenomenon. In 1904 the army estimates fell to £29,225,000 as against a navy estimate of £36,830,000.[1] Would it now be found necessary to reverse the proportion? Possibly, if England must indeed maintain an army comparable in size with those of France and Germany and at the same time a navy stronger than the French and German combined. But was such an army necessary? Yes, if England were in fact exposed to the danger of invasion, the landing on her shores of a large Continental army.

The question engaged the attention of the Committee of Imperial Defence created at the beginning of 1903 by Arthur Balfour, the Prime Minister. It would seem that originally the composition of the Committee was not fixed and that to each meeting the Premier, the sole permanent member, invited whatever members of the cabinet, Generals, Admirals or experts in a particular department he thought fit. Gradually, it seems to have become the custom that any person once invited should be invited every year, and that the inner Committee should be composed of permanent members, a number of highly placed functionaries, Ministers or otherwise, civilians and soldiers. The custom grew up of inviting the heads of the Government Departments and also, when opportunity offered, statesmen from the Dominions. Five years after its creation Lowell, in his study of the British

[1] Taking as typical those years during which the British Government was able to reduce the expenditure on national defence to a minimum, we find the following proportion between the army and navy estimates—Financial year 1858–9: Army estimates £13,295,000, Navy estimates £19,215,000; Financial year 1870–1: Army estimates £14,124,000, Navy estimates £8,970,000. Then both figures rise, but the second more rapidly than the first. In 1895–6 the cost of the navy for the first time exceeded the cost of the army: £19,724,000 as against £18,460,000. Period of the Boer War—Budget of 1901–2: Army estimates £92,542,000, Navy estimates £31,030,000. Budget of 1904–5: Army estimates £29,225,000, Navy estimates £36,830,000. We must remember that in the case of an 'imperial' power like Great Britain such figures can be disputed. If the Colonies contributed nothing or almost nothing, to the normal defence of the Empire, it was not the same with the land forces. Sir Charles Dilke (H. of C., February 23, 1903, *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxviii, pp. 543–4) estimated that when India, the Dominions, and the forces under the control of the Foreign and Colonial Offices were taken into account, the total sum expended by the British Empire on her land armaments exceeded £50,000,000. These and the following calculations are therefore true only of the mother country, the United Kingdom.

Constitution, still expressed doubts as to the future of the Committee.[1] But the following years would prove it a hardy and vigorous institution. When war came the Committee would assume supreme control of military operations on behalf of the United Kingdom and the entire Empire. Meanwhile, in peacetime it functioned as the supreme council for military and naval defence, to whose decision both the War Office and the Admiralty submitted their often conflicting plans. To transcend the professional limitations of the military and naval experts and co-ordinate army and navy in the wider interest of the nation and Empire was the principal function of the Committee. But it rapidly tended to become a sort of super-cabinet, half civilian, half military, whose institution constituted an important innovation in British constitutional history.[2] It had not been in existence for two years when this critical question of the danger of invasion was brought before it. The supposition was made that the regular army was engaged in a foreign campaign far from Britain and the naval squadrons were all in distant waters. Lord Roberts was asked what was the size of the army with which, in his opinion, in view of all the difficulties and risks of transport, an enemy might contemplate invading Great Britain. He replied that he thought it possible to land a foreign army of 70,000 men. The Committee came to the conclusion with, it would seem, at least the provisional agreement of Lord Roberts, that a force of 70,000, supposing it were possible to land it, would be too small to attempt an attack upon London. And it was far from certain that the landing would be possible. Steam transport, wireless telegraphy, submarines were all inventions which favoured the defence. In short, a foreign army fighting on British soil was not a serious possibility.[3] Balfour in the speech in which he explained the Committee's

[1] 'The Committee is intended to deal not only with estimates, but with larger questions of military policy. But whether the result will be permanently attained, or whether the Committee will meet with the usual fate and find itself absorbed by details of administration and of expenditure is yet to be seen.' (A. Lawrence Lowell, *The Government of England*, vol. i, p. 105.) For the origins and development of the Committee see the interesting information in Arnold-Forster, *The Army in 1906*, 1906, p. 388; and General Sir Ian Hamilton, *Compulsory Service: A Study of the Question in the Light of Experience*, 1911; Introduction by the Right Hon. R. B. Haldane, pp. 15–17.

[2] For the serious nature of this innovation which might be regarded as violating the principle of ministerial responsibility see the debate in the House of Commons, March 5, 1903 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxviii, pp. 1570 sqq.).

[3] H. of C., May 11, 1905 (ibid., vol. cxlvi, pp. 62 sqq. especially p. 70). Balfour's language is clearly calculated to give the impression that Lord Roberts agreed with the Committee. But was this anything more than a rhetorical artifice? This at any rate is

views to the House of Commons considered the possibility—he was careful to add immediately 'purely hypothetical'—of a French army, embarked at Brest or Cherbourg, landing on the south coast. The supposition was a transparent device which deceived nobody barely a month before Delcassé's fall when the Tangier incident held public attention. It was Germany which was in the mind of Balfour and his audience. But because fear of Germany continued to grow during the years which followed, the Committee found itself obliged in November 1907 to study the question afresh to reassure the public. As in 1905 it reached the conclusion 'that invasion (so long as our naval supremacy is assured against any reasonably probable combination of Powers) by a force assumed, for purposes of calculation, to be 70,000 men, is impracticable'.

We must be careful not to misunderstand the argument which Balfour developed on May 11, 1905—a speech in which he expounded the views of what was known as the Blue Water School—because it regarded the 'blue water' surrounding Britain as her rampart. Balfour did not say 'the fleet is there, sleep in peace'. This would not have met the contention of the advocates of conscription that a conscript army by mounting guard over the coast would release the fleet for distant operations. It was the view of the Admiralty, shared by the Committee of Imperial Defence, that even in the absence of the fleet, mines and submarines were sufficient to defend the coast. As for the ill-organized reserve forces, militia, volunteers, and yeomanry, neither soldiers nor sailors took them into serious consideration. Professional soldiers had no interest in the militia except as a recruiting ground for the regular army. They were content to leave the volunteers, whom they despised, to their customary disorganization. This was a source of considerable embarrassment to the advocates of con-

certain. Six years later at a time, moreover, when the creation of the territorial army had strengthened the reserve forces, his point of view was entirely different (*Fallacies and Facts* 1911, pp. 120 sqq.). Cf. the article signed Master Mariner in the *Contemporary Review* for February 1909, inspired, Lord Roberts affirms in his criticism of the article, by the War Office. Further, Balfour in his speech did not seem to contemplate an invading force of more than 5,000. The question was again submitted in November 1907 to a sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Its conclusions were given to the House of Commons by Asquith on July 29, 1909 (*Parl. Deb.*, Commons, 1909, 5th Ser., vol. viii, pp. 1356 sqq.), who on this occasion envisaged once more the possibility of a force of 70,000 invading England. But the implications of such a figure must be realized. 'We should', he said, 'have a home army not only adequate to repel raids . . . but a much more serious thing—to compel an enemy which contemplates invasion to come with such substantial force as to make it impossible for them to evade our fleet' (ibid., p. 1388).

scription—they were unwilling to avow openly that, if they wanted a citizen army, it was for entirely different reasons. They were obliged to admit that the needs of the navy took precedence over those of the army, and accept the proportion laid down as normal by the Navy League between the respective expenditure on the army and the navy, twenty-four as against thirty-six million. They were content to urge the necessity of increasing the expenditure on the army *pari passu* with the increase in naval expenditure to provide for other needs than those we have mentioned hitherto. What were they? To answer the question we must first study the various and complicated functions which the regular army fulfilled.

2

The primary function of the British army was to garrison the vast extent of the British Empire, to maintain internal order, and protect the frontiers. In North America there were garrisons in Bermuda and at Halifax. On the route to India and the Far East garrisons were stationed at Gibraltar, in Malta, at Singapore, in Mauritius, and at Hongkong. A brigade—three battalions, in all over four thousand troops—constituted the army of occupation in Egypt. After the restoration of peace in South Africa it had been necessary to leave a force of twenty-five thousand in the country and there was no reason to suppose that it could be reduced in the near future. Finally there were fifty-two battalions —seventy-six thousand men—in British India and at Aden. Obviously these outposts could not be permanently occupied by an army of young conscripts serving two or three years with the colours. More seasoned troops, inured to a lengthy period of life in barracks, were necessary. The system of short service enlistments in existence at the period of the Boer War was only a system of *short* service by comparison with the *long* service of the period before 1872. Measured by Continental standards the seven years' enlistment substituted for the previous twelve was an extraordinarily long service. And it was to furnish the necessary troops to replenish the foreign garrisons, constantly reduced by disease or as the men's term of service expired, that Cardwell, the Secretary for War, had devised in 1871 that system of linked battalions whose principle we have already had occasion to ex-

plain. Each regiment was composed of two battalions. One of these was on service abroad. The other, the home battalion, while kept in constant readiness to take part in a campaign abroad, served as a recruiting ground and training barracks for the foreign unit.[1]

The system was not always easy to work. When after 1895 the Government embarked on a policy of imperialist annexation the number of battalions serving abroad increased so considerably that it was no longer possible to provide each with a home battalion. And home battalions had been despatched to distant Colonies. On one occasion, against all precedent, a battalion of the Guards had been sent to garrison Gibraltar. But the system had broken down completely when, in 1899, it became necessary to rush à large army to South Africa. This was a problem for which it was plain that Cardwell's system of linked battalions could provide no solution, and the British nation began to realize the danger to which it would be exposed, sooner or later, of a war far more serious than the Boer War, in which to resist a European foe it would be necessary to employ not only the entire navy but the entire army as well.

To what quarter did it seem likely that this expeditionary force, which had to be improvised at the end of 1899, would be sent? The traditional view, common to the War Office and the Admiralty, envisaged its despatch after the conclusion of the Boer War to British India to meet the Russian menace.[2] The British navy

[1] For Cardwell's system see the excellent chapter by General Sir Robert Biddulph, *Lord Cardwell at the War Office: A History of his Administration 1868–1874*, 1904, pp. 161 sqq.

[2] L. S. Amery, *The Problem of the Army*, 1903 (the preface is dated November 1) p. 146: 'The Russian Empire can fairly be described as our most formidable and also most probable military adversary.' H. of C., March 7, 1904, Arnold-Forster's speech: '. . . We propose to complete during the next year 108 field guns and eighteen Royal Horse Artillery guns . . . India is the only possible place of contact with a great European Army. . . . There will be greater value for these guns in India than there would be here, and therefore we propose to assign to India practically the whole of the output of these guns for the coming year' (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxxxi, pp. 342–3). H. of C., March 9, 1904, Balfour's speech: '. . . Though I do not believe that this landing of a great organized force . . . is possible, no man can blind himself to the fact that the whole trend of circumstances in the East is to make us a Continental Power conterminous with another great military Continental Power, and that is the dominating circumstance which we have to take into account in framing our Army Estimates' (ibid., vol. cxxxi, pp. 623–4). H. of C., June 28, 1904, Arnold-Forster's speech: '. . . We have had the guidance of the Committee of Defence . . . upon the general problem as to the work the Army has to do outside the United Kingdom and we have realized that oversea work would be the great demand on our Army. Of all the problems of oversea the most pressing, the most definite in one sense, the most indefinite in another sense, must be the problem which may arise on the only great land frontier we have. The Indian problem is a very complicated one. . . .' (ibid., vol. cxxxvi, p. 1497). H. of C., May 11, 1905, Balfour's great speech (ibid., vol.

would therefore be responsible for conveying an enormous army from Europe to Asia, either by rounding South Africa or traversing the Mediterranean, where, as in a closed vessel, the ambitions of a host of different nations clashed. The transport of the British troops to South Africa had been a brilliant success, which had aroused universal admiration at a time when Britain's military organization was the object of severe and well-merited criticism. But it would have been impossible if the seas had been scoured by hostile cruisers and submarines, and the German naval law of 1900, while increasing the danger of this, suggested new possibilities to British sailors—the despatch of an expeditionary force to Flanders to meet a German invasion, side by side with the French army and the small Belgian army, or preferably to Hanover to create a diversion.

It was a new problem which at once involved a concerted plan between the army and the navy. The Admiralty laid down as a fundamental principle that an expeditionary force could not be transported abroad until the seas had been cleared of the enemy. It must have time to win another Trafalgar. This would require nine months at most. It would then be able to undertake the transport of an army. It was an obstacle which the impatience of the War Office could ill brook. But an obstacle perhaps which had its advantages in the eyes of the champions of conscription. The latter, as we have seen, did not advocate conscription in the full sense. They did not claim that the short periods of military service which their programme demanded would enable those who had performed them to go to the front immediately a war was declared. But if they were mobilized at once the delay imposed on the War Office by the tactics of the Admiralty would give time for an intensive training. When after some months the Admiralty declared the seas clear they could be profitably amalgamated with the old professional army. Thus, without daring to say so publicly for fear of alienating still further a public opinion already hostile, the advocates of National Service contemplated the possibility of sending British conscripts on active

cxlvi, pp. 78 sqq.). Ten months later the tone has completely changed: H. of C., March 8, 1906, Haldane's speech: '. . . A short time ago we were menaced on the N.W. frontier of India by Russia. Are we menaced by Russia today? (Cries of No.) Have circumstances changed or have they not? Are they not different from what they were? If circumstances have changed, is it necessary to maintain that vast establishment in India, which causes us at home inevitably to incur a large expenditure in keeping up the materials from which to supply drafts for the Indian Army?' (ibid., vol. cliii, p. 675).

service abroad. Not to India, indeed; that was out of the question. But possibly to the Continent. If in 1805 England had possessed a conscript army, it would not have taken herself and her allies ten years' hard struggle to complete Trafalgar by Waterloo.

3

The task of reorganizing the army was begun in 1901 in the midst of the Boer War by Lord Lansdowne's successor at the War Office, St. John Brodrick. For the moment he refrained from asking for conscription. Without adopting that extreme measure he determined to imitate the German model and put an end once and for all to the condition of sheer chaos which had come to seem the natural state of the British army—nothing but isolated regiments, no regular grouping of brigades, divisions, or army corps, and no centre of organization except the War Office. He proposed, and actually began to carry into effect, the establishment of six army corps in the United Kingdom. There were to be three in the South of England, one in the North, one in Ireland, and one in Scotland. Each army corps constituted a complete and permanent unit with its staff, its infantry, its cavalry, its artillery, its medical corps, and its commissariat. A valuable work of decentralization would thus be accomplished. The fact that so much would be done within each army corps would relieve considerably the congestion at the War Office. And on the other hand a sudden international crisis would not find the country unprepared as it had been in 1899. Three of these army corps would be kept in readiness for active service, which would mean a force of twenty thousand available for immediate despatch abroad. Several measures were taken to obtain the necessary number of recruits. The pay was raised from 7d. in 1896 to 1/6 in 1904. The conditions of life in barracks were improved; the soldiers were treated a little more as men, a little less as machines. Brodrick further devised a new system of short-service enlistments—three years with the colours, nine in the reserve—which had the advantage of attracting more recruits. And if their period of service was shorter, they remained liable to be called up at any moment. Here too—conscription apart—the German model was followed. Finally, to prevent the constant depletion of the home battalions to

replenish those on foreign service, Brodrick, abandoning for the first time the system of linked battalions, created a Royal Garrison Regiment to invite the enlistment of soldiers who, having completed their period of service, were willing to lead at Gibraltar. for example, or in Malta an easy and inactive life as sentinels of the empire.[1]

But the scheme immediately aroused lively criticism,[2] both from the Gladstonians, who thought that it went too far, and the Imperialists, who thought that it was on the wrong lines. The former protested against the serious cost of maintaining permanently six army corps. It would involve, they argued, when the system was in full working, an annual expenditure upon the army of £40,000,000. The latter denounced Brodrick as an illusionist. Only the first three army corps were genuine army corps. The other three existed only on paper and were a mixture of professional soldiers and volunteers. It was to a motley force of this kind that it was proposed to entrust the defence of Great Britain when the expeditionary force had gone abroad! And finally there was one point on which everyone agreed, that Brodrick's scheme must be modified. The enlistments for three years had worked well when recruits were wanted in large numbers for a war which could not last very long. But the system became unworkable when soldiers were needed to relieve the garrisons in distant colonial possessions. Soldiers were actually being sent out to India to serve only ten months, And about the summer of 1903 the War Office began to find itself unable to obtain recruits even on these terms. These distant garrisons were rapidly becoming depleted.[3]

[1] For an account of Brodrick's system see his speech, H. of C., March 8, 1901 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. xc, pp. 1052 sqq.).

[2] H. of C., February 24, 1903, debate on Beckett's amendment to the address (ibid., vol. cxviii, pp. 682 sqq.). Winston Spencer Churchill, *Mr. Brodrick's Army*, 1903. L. S. Amery, *The Problem of the Army*, 1903, Chap. II, pp. 19 sqq.

[3] 'I have had means of finding out for certain, what the newspapers have so often guessed at, that the first four War Secretaries have with the greatest difficulty been able to supply sufficient drafts for India. Sums of so much as £15 of the taxpayers' money—what were they but bribes?—have been paid to soldiers in India, to get them to extend their service. Men suffering imprisonment in military prisons here in England have been released before the expiration of their sentences, on condition that they would "volunteer" for some regiment in India' (Robert Edmondson, Ex-Squadron Sergeant-Major, *John Bull's Army from Within, with an Introduction by Arnold White*, 1907).

4

When the Cabinet was reconstituted in September 1903, Brodrick was banished from the War Office, like his predecessor Lord Lansdowne at the end of 1900. He went to the India Office and was succeeded at the War Office by Arnold-Forster, who had made a reputation as an expert student of the problem of army reform.[1] It was a problem whose solution seemed more urgent than ever when the report of the Royal Commission appointed at the end of 1902 to inquire into the preparations for the Boer War and the conduct of the early operations had just been made public.[2] In its report, which appeared in August, the Commission had censured the absence of a plan of campaign, and of an expeditionary force ready for immediate embarkation, the lack of information, the insufficient supply of horses and means of transport, and the disorganization of the War Office. Arnold-Forster's position at the War Office was in one respect easier, in another more difficult, than Brodrick's had been. Easier, because unlike his predecessor he was not obliged to prepare his plans for reorganization in the middle of a war. More difficult because in 1903 the public, war-weary, had begun to demand economies rather than reforms, the reduction of the expenditure upon the army rather than its organization. Arnold-Forster was faced with the problem of achieving more than his predecessors with less money.

His work of reform was twofold. It was in the first place a reorganization of the War Office, secondly a reorganization of the army itself.

The Commission of Inquiry into the Boer War had denounced abuses rather than proposed remedies. It had however indicated the general lines on which a reform of the War Office should proceed,[3] and one of its members, Lord Esher, in a special appen-

[1] See his work, *The War Office, the Army and the Empire: A review of the Military Situation in 1900 . . . with a Preface by the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Rosebery*, 1900.

[2] *Royal Commission on the War in South Africa: A Commission appointed to inquire into the military preparations for the War of South Africa and into the supply of men, ammunition, equipment and transport by sea and in campaign and into the military operations up to the Occupation of Pretoria.* Appointed in October 1902, it consisted of Lord Elgin, the Chairman, and eight other members, among them Lord Esher. It heard a hundred and fourteen witnesses and reported on August 25, 1903. A very complete summary will be found in *The Times* for August 26.

[3] *Report*, p. 132 sqq.

dix[1] had given a more definite shape to the plan suggested by the Commission. Lord Esher and his colleagues had criticized the anomalous position of the Commander-in-Chief, in relation to the Secretary for War. It had not been defined by law or custom. The Commission also recalled that Lord Hartington's Commission had in 1890 advised the abolition of the post, that it had nevertheless been retained, although with reduced powers, by the Unionist Government of 1895 and that the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Wolseley, had taken advantage of the Boer War to extend his authority, an attempt which had led to considerable friction. The Commission recommended that the Commander-in-Chief should be replaced by an Inspector-General wholly independent of the War Office whose function it would be to present an annual report, showing how far the wishes of Parliament had been carried out in the organization of the army. Further, the Commission, repeating recommendations made both by the Hartington Commission[2] and a Committee of 1901[3] advised that to secure unity and continuity of policy, the joint authority of the departments of the War Office should be reinforced by combining the various branches of the service in an organization which would occupy a position in regard to the army similar to that of the Board of Admiralty in regard to the navy. Arnold-Forster had scarcely entered the War Office when, in concert with the Prime Minister, Balfour, he appointed a small committee of three —Lord Esher, Admiral Sir John Fisher, and Sir George Clarke, the future Lord Sydenham, to work out these recommendations in a detailed form. Three long reports published in rapid succession satisfied the reformers.[4] At the same time to strengthen the Committee of Imperial Defence and protect it against the possible whims of some future Liberal premier, the Committee recommended that it should be turned into a regular department of state by setting up a 'permanent secretariat' to consist of a repre-

[1] *Report*, p. 144 sqq.

[2] *Preliminary and further Reports of the Royal Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Civil and Professional Administration of the Naval and Military Departments, and the relations of these departments to each other and to the Treasury*, 1890, p. xxi.

[3] Its chairman was Sir Clinton Dawkins. Its object was among others to inquire 'whether the present method of conducting the administrative and financial business of the War Office and its distribution as between the Civil and Military Departments is satisfactory' and to suggest methods 'which would bring the work of the War Office more into harmony with that of large business undertakings'.

[4] *War Office (Reconstitution) Committee. First Report*, January 18, 1904. *Second Report*, February 26, 1904. *Third Report*, March 9, 1904.

sentative of the army and a representative of the navy with their subordinates. Its function would be to furnish the civilian members of the Committee with all the technical information they might require and also—though this was not directly stated—to enforce conformity to the official policy if the civilians were suspected of deviating from it.

On this, as on other points, the recommendations of the Committee were immediately carried into effect. The first report had scarcely been published on February 1, when Arnold-Forster instituted the Army Council, a copy of the Board of Admiralty, for which the Committee had asked. The Committee had recommended that all its members should be new men. He carried out its recommendation. So far as the three civilian members were concerned, this was effected automatically, since he had brought with him to the War Office a new under-secretary and a new financial secretary. But the four military members were also newcomers, not one of whom had previously been at the War Office. They were the Chief of General Staff, responsible for collecting information and making the strategic preparations for a war, the Adjutant-General in charge of the personnel, the Quarter-Master General in charge of supplies, and the Master General of the Ordnance responsible for the artillery and fortifications. There was no longer any Commander-in-Chief, and the first Inspector-General, whose functions were very strictly limited, was the King's brother, the Duke of Connaught. The Government attempted to obtain for the new council the express sanction of a statute. But the Bill was dropped, it would seem because the opposition of constitutionalists who disliked this supervision of responsible ministers by a bureaucratic institution had proved embarrassing.[1] The Army Council was set up notwithstanding by letters patent and an order in council. It was a permanent institution, altogether different from the War Office Council set up during the Boer War by Brodrick, which derived all its authority from the Prime Minister, or the Army Board, of which the Commander-in-Chief, not the Secretary for War, had been chairman and which, revived in 1900, had disappeared once more

[1] For this opposition see H. of L., July 29, 1904, Lord Spencer's speech (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxxxix, pp. 71 sqq.), and for the entire question the explanations given by R. B. Haldane, H. of L., April 6, 1909 (ibid., 1909, 5th Ser., vol. iii, pp. 934 sqq.).

with the restoration of peace.[1] In 1905 all the detailed arrangements of the various branches of the service were reorganized and brought into conformity with the four new departments.[2] The reform marked an epoch in the development of British military bureaucracy, and British bureaucracy in general. Arnold-Forster was less successful when he tackled a vaster problem, the reform of the army itself.

5

We might have expected that his work of reform would have been made easier by the Royal Commission on the militia and volunteers appointed in 1903, which reported on May 20, 1904.[3] But if the report established the urgent necessity of reform, it contained practically no useful suggestions as to the reforms which should be made. As regards the militia the Commission suggested that the periods of training and of service should be lengthened and brigades and divisions set up; as regards the volunteers, an alteration of the system according to which the Government grants were made, the institution at the War Office of a special department for the volunteers, and again the establishment of brigades and divisions. But it made these recommendations with great hesitation, or rather with indifference. The real conclusion the Commission reached was that since the five great Continental powers had possessed a conscript army for the last quarter of a century, England by her refusal to follow their example placed herself in the event of a war with any one of them in an inferior position from the start. Conscription therefore should be adopted —not even the modified system of the Swiss militia. This proves what a strong hold the principle of conscription possessed over military opinion. But how fantastic a suggestion of this kind was!

It is sufficient to read the report to perceive that the all but

[1] *Report of Royal Commission on the War in South Africa*, pp. 138 sqq.

[2] *Memorandum of the Secretary of State relating to the Army Estimates for 1905–6*, pp. 7 sqq.

[3] *Militia and Volunteers (Royal Commission) Report of the Royal Commission on the Militia and Volunteers with Appendices*, May 20, 1904. The Commission which consisted of eight members, its chairman being the Duke of Norfolk, had been appointed 'to inquire into the organization, numbers, and terms of service of the Militia and Volunteer Forces; and to report whether any and if any, what changes are required in order to secure that these forces shall be maintained in a condition of military efficiency and at an adequate strength'.

unanimous recommendations of the Commission were doomed from the outset to remain a dead letter, and that throughout the inquiry its members had been faced with departmental hostility when they attempted to obtain the information which would enable them to estimate exactly the risks of invasion against which the country should take precautions. After the War Office had informed them that the question they had to consider was the provision for home defence of an army of three hundred thousand, including sixty-six thousand regulars, they had consulted the Committee of Imperial Defence, which had pointed out that since the Admiralty declared it impossible to land more than five to ten thousand troops on the English coast there was no reason to ask for these three hundred thousand. They had thereupon betaken themselves to the Admiralty itself, which had declined to give evidence, and then once more to the Committee of Imperial Defence, whose chairman had been content to ask the Commission not to enlarge unduly the field of its inquiries.[1] It was very soon evident that the recommendations of the Commission had no practical importance, and when the question was raised in the House of Lords, Lord Lansdowne stated that in recommending conscription the Commission had exceeded its powers.[2] Arnold-Forster's system was totally different.

An admirer and student of the German army, as with good reason were all military experts, Arnold-Forster had reached the conclusion that an army quartered in barracks is superior to a militia. This had been sufficiently proved by the way in which General Chanzy's army had crumpled up in 1870 before the army of Prince Frederick-Charles. It was out of the question to introduce the Prussian system into England and make all physically-fit youths into soldiers living in barracks. The system already established in England must therefore be preserved—a professional army quartered in barracks and recruited by voluntary enlistment. Its organization, however, must be improved, while the number of soldiers was reduced. This would satisfy at once the Conservative demand for efficiency and the Liberal demand for economy. He abandoned the system of linked battalions which necessitated the maintenance at home of a number of battalions equal to that of the battalions serving abroad. He announced his

[1] *Report of Royal Commission on Militia and Volunteers*, pp. 4–5.
[2] H. of L., June 27, 1904 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxxxvi, pp. 1210 sqq.).

intention to abandon Brodrick's expensive system of six army corps. What the army reformers demanded, and in particular the Committee on the reorganization of the War Office, was a wide measure of administrative decentralization. But to place the entire burden of administering the army on the generals in command of the army corps would merely relieve the War Office by overburdening the generals. He divided the United Kingdom for military purposes into a number of purely administrative districts. As regards the command he announced his intention to substitute for the army corps a too ambitious system which did not answer the genuine needs of the country, a system of divisions, and at the same time he promised to organize a striking force of sixteen thousand men ready for immediate despatch abroad. He dissolved nineteen battalions and proposed to equip the country with two distinct military organizations. On the one hand there would be a hundred and four 'general service' battalions with good pay and service enlistments—nine years with the colours, three in the reserve. On the other hand there would be seventy-one 'home service' battalions stationed in the counties and bearing their names, commanded by subalterns of the general service army and by officers interchangeable with officers of the latter. It would be the old militia but amalgamated with the regular army, the sole difference being the easier conditions and far shorter terms of service—two years with the colours, six in the reserve, and lower pay. The number of volunteers was reduced. The figure, reached in 1904, of two hundred and fifty thousand was too high. A hundred and eighty thousand would be enough. Arnold-Forster proposed to divide them into two classes. Sixty thousand, well paid, compactly organized, and subjected to a more severe training would constitute a genuine fighting force. The remaining hundred and twenty thousand, who would receive only the training given hitherto to all volunteers, would form a reserve which could be profitably employed in the event of war.[1]

As will appear later Arnold-Forster's scheme was not without its good points. It was a failure nevertheless. This was primarily

[1] Arnold-Forster explained his system at Liverpool on January 28, 1904, to the House of Commons on July 14 of the same year (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxxxviii, pp. 52 sqq.), and in 1906 in a volume entitled *The Army in 1906: A Policy and a Vindication*, 1906. Cf. Lord Haliburton, *The Army Organization: The Arnold-Forster Scheme*, 1905, and Mrs. Arnold-Forster, *The Right Honourable Hugh Oakeley Arnold-Forster—A Memoir*, 1910, pp. 224 sqq.

due to defects inherent in a system which experience would compel his successor to abandon. These long-service enlistments of nine years had been adopted to satisfy the pressing need to replenish the garrisons depleted by the three-years' system which the necessities of the Boer War had forced on Brodrick. They had proved successful; in India and elsewhere in 1905 the battalions were at their full strength. But the system must inevitably break down the moment the nine-years' enlistments had to compete with the two-years' enlistments required to furnish the home-service battalions.

Arnold-Forster therefore postponed the latter scheme and a Militia Bill introduced in 1905 was a mere gesture. It was never even debated. The reorganization of the volunteers was also postponed.[1] And he had further difficulties to face. A member of a Conservative Cabinet, he did not find it easy to overcome the opposition of a host of vested interests. The speeches he delivered in Parliament during 1905 give the impression of an animal hunted down by a pack. 'I find I am dealing with at least six armies. I am dealing with the Army in India, the Indian Army, the Army at home, the Militia, the Volunteers, and the great army of those who have left the colours and are now entrenched in the clubs of this city.'[2] In the Cabinet itself he had to suffer from the intrigues of Lord Lansdowne and Brodrick, the two former Secretaries for War, who had no wish to see Forster succeed where they had failed and who spread the report that his plan represented only his personal views not those of the Government as a whole. Moreover, he belonged to a party in rapid decline and hastening towards the defeat at the polls whose imminence no one doubted. He was therefore exposed to a cross-fire, from the opposition speakers and from the irregulars of his own party. He vanished in 1905 in the general rout of the Unionists without having had time to effect anything. In the new Cabinet Richard Burdon Haldane took his place.

[1] *Memorandum of the Secretary of State relating to the Army Estimates for 1905–6*, p. 6; also Arnold-Forster, *The Army in 1906*, p. 211.

[2] H. of C., March 28, 1905 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxliii, pp. 1419–20). For the objections brought against his plan see especially the debate in the House of Lords on July 29, 1904 (ibid., vol. cxxxix, pp. 45 sqq.), and in the House of Commons, March 28, 1905 (ibid., vol. cxliii, pp. 1398 sqq.).

6

We have witnessed Haldane's attempt to make himself Lord Chancellor. When he saw him accept the War Office, Campbell-Bannerman believed he had entrapped a colleague who hated him, and whom he hated with equal cordiality. 'Serve him right,' an old friend wrote gleefully to the Premier on receipt of the news.[1] For Sir Henry knew better than anyone how dearly the War Office might cost a British politician. It was his conduct of the department which in the summer of 1895 had been, if not the real cause of the overthrow of the Liberal Cabinet, at any rate the immediate pretext. Since then he had been the amused and often sarcastic witness of the unfortunate efforts made by his successors —Lord Lansdowne, St. John Brodrick, and finally Arnold-Forster. 'Leave the old army alone and don't make war.' The device sums up his policy of inaction.[2] Haldane was a politician of the most active type. He was far too intelligent not to perceive the difficulties of the task he had so lightly assumed, as a member of a cabinet on principle indifferent to the army, and serving under a chief who distrusted him. But he believed himself capable of overcoming them. Moreover, he was aware of the unprecedented importance which attached to this question of army reorganization in the light of the inevitable conflict with Germany. By giving him the War Office Campbell-Bannerman flung him a challenge. He took it up.[3]

His first reform was the creation in September 1906 of a General Staff.[4] It consisted of seventy-two officers who met at the War Office with the Chief of Staff presiding to study problems of

[1] J. A. Spender, *The Life of the Right Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*, vol. ii, p. 198.

[2] See his speech H. of C., February 5, 1904 (an amendment to the Address was being debated complaining of England's unpreparedness for the Boer War): '. . . The right honourable gentleman says that in the time of his predecessor the defences of the colonies were so neglected that there were only two battalions or 3,000 men in South Africa and the Government had to raise the force. Yes, Sir, because the force depends upon your policy. At that time there was no ground for fear whatever. The force was adjusted to the policy. There are two policies that you can pursue in a case such as this. There is the policy of force and of threats resting upon force and on the other hand there is a policy of patience and of peaceful and conciliatory negotiation' (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxxix, pp. 494–5). The following day the Unionist Press was up in arms. See *The Times*, February 6, 1904: '. . . The Opposition cannot first obstruct the reinforcement of our Army and then pose as censors of the Government for not reinforcing it.'

[3] For the work which Haldane accomplished at the War Office see the interesting details given by himself, *Before the War*, 1920, pp. 156 sqq.; *An Autobiography*, 1929, pp. 168 sqq.

[4] *Army Order constituting a General Staff.* The text will be found together with a summary of Haldane's memorandum accompanying it in *The Times* of September 13, 1906.

strategy. They followed in rotation and were obliged to return to active service when their time on the General Staff had expired. Such was the new institution with which Haldane equipped the War Office to provide, as he said, the British army with a 'brain'. In consequence the organization of the War Office, so long inferior to that of the Admiralty, became superior to it. The army was indebted to Arnold-Forster for an Army Council, a copy of the Board of Admiralty. Haldane provided the Army Council with a General Staff of which the Board of Admiralty possessed no counterpart. From what source did he get the idea of his new institution? From Germany as he frankly admitted. Moreover, his institution of the General Staff had been immediately preceded by a journey to Berlin to study German methods, which had caused keen anxiety in Paris and alarmed the Foreign Office itself.[1] Haldane thus began to play the ambiguous role he would maintain till 1914. An admirer, indeed a devotee of Germany, by his constant declarations of affection for the Germans, his friendship with the ambassador Metternich and his frequent visits to Germany, he reassured the advanced Liberals and the partisans of an Anglo-German *entente*. On the other hand, knowing Germany too well not to admire the genius for organization, military organization in particular, which rendered her England's most dangerous rival, and entertaining nothing but contempt for pacifist idealism, though at times to flatter Liberal opinion he used its phraseology, he prepared by German methods to wage war with Germany. This creation of a General Staff, however cleverly he may have staged it, was not however his personal work. As early as 1890 Lord Hartington's Commission had asked for it;[2] and Lord Esher's Committee again in 1904.[3] Arnold-Forster on the very eve of the fall of the Unionist Government had drawn up a complete scheme,[4] which except for a few modifications of detail

[1] R. B. Haldane, *Before the War*, pp. 22 sqq.; *An Autobiography*, pp. 89 sqq., 202 sqq.; *British Documents* . . . vol. iii, pp. 357–69, 372–3: see especially on p. 373 a minute by Sir Eric Barrington attached as a note to despatch sent from Berlin on August 30 by Lord Granville to Sir Edward Grey: 'We have done all we could short of preventing Mr. Haldane from going to Berlin at all.'

[2] *Preliminary and Further Report (with Appendices) of the Royal Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Civil and Professional Administration of the Naval and Military Departments and the Relation of those Departments to each other and to the Treasury*, 1890, pp. xxii–xxiii.

[3] *War Office (Reconstitution) Committee First Report*, pp. 3–4. *Second Report*, pp. 21 sqq.

[4] *Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War on the General Staff of the Army*, November 21, 1905; for the origin of this Memorandum, which was in fact the work of Sir Henry Wilson, see Major-General Sir C. B. Callwell, *Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, His Life and Diaries*, vol. i, pp. 56 sqq. (especially pp. 63–4).

Haldane had copied. Moreover, had not Arnold-Forster on the recommendation of Lord Esher and Sir John Fisher appointed as his private secretary Colonel Ellison, who had drawn up the Esher Committee's report? Had he not on Colonel Ellison's recommendation placed on the Army Council as Quarter-Master-General Sir William Nicolson who, under Brodrick, had occupied a position amounting to that of Chief of Staff without the title? And had there not been in existence from the beginning of 1904 a President of the Army Council who was entitled Chief of General Staff and who could not exercise his functions adequately until a General Staff had been completely organized? An irresistible force was pushing the Secretary for War, whoever he might be, to take a step which he fondly imagined his personal initiative. That old Gladstonian, Campbell-Bannerman, had been able to speak a very different language when he was a member of Lord Hartington's Commission. 'We have no designs against our European neighbours. Indian "military policy" will be settled in India itself, and not in Pall Mall. In any of the smaller troubles into which we may be drawn by the interests of some of our dependencies, the plan of campaign must be governed by the particular circumstances, and would be left (I presume and hope) to be determined by the officer appointed to direct operations.'[1] And at the beginning of the Boer War Lord Wolseley appears to have shared Campbell-Bannerman's opinion that it was not for officials in London to restrict by strategic orders the commander's free initiative.[2] Such views were now thoroughly out of date. And it was a triumph indeed for an imperialist and a champion of 'efficiency' like Haldane to put the finishing touches to a military reorganization inspired by principles wholly different from those of the older school. The creed of scientific preparation and organization was sweeping before it the philosophy of instinct, improvization, and liberty.

7

But the ease with which on this point Haldane overcame old Liberal prejudices and succeeded where Arnold-Forster had succeeded before him in reorganizing the headquarters staff was

[1] *Lord Hartington's Commission's Reports*, p. xxix.
[2] See my *History of the English People*, vol. v, pp. 81–3.

matched by the difficulty of reorganizing the army itself. Here Forster had failed and Haldane was likely to find the problem even more difficult. For the new Parliament was more eager than the Unionists had been to reduce expenditure on the army, and a reduction was harder to effect than it had been at the close of the Boer War, when on the one hand the return to a peace footing had automatically diminished expenditure and on the other hand a vast accumulation of unused material had made it possible to reduce purchases on a large scale. Paul Cambon doubted Haldane's success. 'To create an army money and men are required. The Liberal Cabinet will not provide the money, the nation will not provide the men. Haldane will not succeed.'[1] Haldane however did succeed, not only in effecting economies without detriment to the efficiency of the service, but actually in improving its efficiency and that not by round-about methods but by introducing in 1907 a comprehensive measure, for which he secured from the Premier the promise of ample time for its discussion and from the Leader of the Opposition a pledge that no systematic obstruction would make it impossible to pass the Bill before the end of the session.[2]

As regards the regular army (this had nothing to do with the Army Bill of 1907: it was a work of reorganization completed before the Bill was introduced[3]). Haldane's method was very similar to that which Forster had favoured, one which might be fittingly called a concentration of forces. Thanks to a host of economies effected in the general expenditure, the army would be less expensive, but at the same time it would be stronger, because its organization was more compact. Anticipating the wishes of the Liberal majority and thus obtaining forgiveness for his reputation as an imperialist, Haldane effected economies which exposed him to violent attacks by the Unionist opposition, in

[1] Conversation reported by Colonel Repington, *The Times*, July 16, 1916.

[2] 7 Edw. 7, Cap. 9: An Act to provide for the reorganization of His Majesty's military forces and for that purpose to authorize the establishment of County Associations and the raising and maintenance of a Territorial Force and for amending the Acts relating to the Reserve Forces (*Territorial and Reserve Forces Act*, 1907). For Haldane's system see the preliminary outlines of 1906 explained in his speeches in the House on March 8 and July 12, 1906 (reproduced in his book entitled *Army Reform and Other Addresses*, pp. 3 sqq., 40 sqq.); the *Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War on Army Reorganization*, July 30, 1906; also the important speech delivered on February 25, 1907 introducing the Army Bill (*Army Reforms and other Addresses*, pp. 94 sqq.).

[3] Haldane's speech at Glasgow, January 11, 1907; *The Army Order* of January 1, 1907, also the *Memorandum on the Organisation for War of the Troops forming the Field Army for Service Abroad*, same date.

particular by Arnold-Forster, who had become the bitter and untiring critic of his successor's actions.[1] The army estimates, which had fallen from £92,500,000 in 1901 to £69,400,000 in 1902, £36,700,000 in 1903 (the first years of complete peace), £29,200,000 in 1904, and £28,800,000 in 1905 continued to fall to £27,800,000 in 1906, £27,100,000 in 1907 and £26,800,000 in 1908.

Haldane's procedure was to abolish a number of units, and instead of discharging the men who had filled them to employ them in other branches of the service, thus strengthening the army while reducing expenditure and without increasing the total number of troops. He decided to dissolve eight battalions of the line, and two battalions of Guards. He handed over the defence of the coast to the Admiralty, thus freeing two thousand soldiers for other service. The defence of the coast also employed some twelve thousand militiamen. These could now be used in other employments of a semi-civilian character, to take the place of regulars who could be employed in other ways. Moreover, profiting by the mistakes of his two predecessors, Haldane substituted for Brodrick's enlistments (three years in the regular army, nine in the reserve), which unduly inflated the reserve at the cost of the regular army, and Arnold-Forster's enlistments (nine years in the regular army, three in the reserve), which incurred the opposite fault and made impossible any other shorter term of enlistment which would compete with the longer-term enlistments, an intermediate system, seven years in the regular army and five in the reserve. The men secured by these various means he grouped in an organization which was a return to the system of linked battalions, seventy-two battalions of infantry at home and an equal number in the Colonies. Moreover, he abandoned the system Brodrick had inaugurated of dividing these battalions into army corps. Forster had intended to do this but had not had time to carry out his intention. Haldane was content to group them in divisions of fifteen thousand men, on the model of the divisions in the Indian army. Six divisions with four brigades of cavalry

[1] H. of C., March 8, July 12, 1906 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cliii, pp. 686 sqq.; vol. clx, pp. 1119 sqq.). Letter to *The Times* under the title 'Mr. Haldane's Scheme' (*The Times*, March 5, 1907). H. of C., June 5, 19, 1907, March 4, 1909 (*Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., vol. clxxv, pp. 702 sqq., 761 sqq.; vol. clxxvi, pp. 492 sqq.; Commons, 1909, 5th Ser., vol. i, pp. 1626 sqq.); also his work entitled *Military Needs and Military Policy: With an Introduction by Field-Marshal Earl Roberts*, 1909.

and all the artillery and engineers necessary to support them were kept in constant readiness, either to supply the men needed to relieve the garrisons abroad, or to be despatched after the reserves had been mobilized to make war outside the United Kingdom. There was a total force, with the reserves, of about a hundred and sixty thousand. This 'expeditionary force' was, though on a much vaster scale, the striking-force Arnold-Forster had in vain attempted to form during his two years' tenure of office.

Behind this army of the first line, but in close association with it, Haldane created (this was one of the provisions of the Act of 1907) a 'special reserve' which would differ from the militia by the fact that its officers and non-commissioned officers would be regulars and its recruits would take an engagement to serve abroad in case of war. But it would be recruited from the same sources as the militia had been. The enlistments, which would be for six years, would involve six months' training at the outset followed by periods of a fortnight a year, with the same pay as the soldiers in the regular army received. There was no need for the hundred and twenty-four battalions of which the militia had consisted. A number of battalions equal to those of the regular army would suffice and they could be attached to the latter as reserve battalions in the proportion of one, two, or three battalions to every regiment of two battalions in the regular army. The battalions of the special reserve would not be allowed to fall below a strength of five or six hundred. Arnold-Forster protested that Haldane was simply reviving his own scheme for reforming the militia. His protest was justified and it was apparently to give him satisfaction that the Bill of 1907 was amended on this point. In its original form the Bill presented the 'special reserve' as a new force, created *in toto* by Haldane, something entirely apart from the militia and volunteers. In the statute as it emerged from the debates the 'special reserve' was presented as a transformation of the militia. But was Arnold-Forster equally right when he went further, accused Haldane of wantonly ruining his system, and argued that the periods of training prescribed by the new measure were too short to turn out genuine soldiers? Haldane could reply that these short periods were inevitable if a sufficient number of recruits was to be secured and that their training could be completed, either when they were incorporated into the regular army or, on the outbreak of war, were organized in battalions and sub-

jected to a lengthy training, and further that for men placed under regular military discipline and brought into close contact with professional soldiers the brevity of their training would have the advantage of forging a closer link between the regular army and the civil population.

8

It was in the matter of a second-line force in the strict sense that Haldane departed from Arnold-Forster. The latter, faithful to his method of concentrating the organization of the army, wanted to reduce the number of volunteers, and make of the remainder a nucleus, better trained than had been the case hitherto and more capable of fighting an army entirely trained in barracks. Haldane on the contrary bore in mind the principle laid down by Lord Elgin's Commission: 'That no military system will be satisfactory which does not contain powers of expansion outside the limit of the regular forces of the Crown, whatever that limit may be.'[1] And it was to the volunteers that he looked to ensure this power of expansion. Unlike Forster he did not want their numbers reduced. On the contrary he wanted them more numerous. Not indeed to repel an invasion. For that task a small body would be sufficient, and the guard kept by the navy rendered the eventuality doubtful. But to reinforce the expeditionary force when the latter, having faced on the Continent the enemy's initial attack, would need to make up its losses and receive reinforcements. This volunteer force need not be completely trained, but all its members, while acquiring without interruption of their normal life a modicum of military training and some experience of camp life, were invited to take an engagement that on the outbreak of war they would undergo the lengthy training necessary to transform them into competent soldiers.

Haldane therefore completely reorganized the second-line force, incorporating into a new army, to which he gave the name Territorial Force, whatever was left of the militia after its bulk had been formed into the Special Reserve, the Yeomanry which required little change, and the Volunteers.[2] The latter were res-

[1] *Report of Royal Commission on the War in South Africa*, p. 83.

[2] For the origins and history of the Territorial Army see three articles in *The Times*, April 1 and 2, and May 7, 1929, entitled 'A Citizen Army'.

cued from the state of disorganization in which they had stagnated for half a century. He abolished, thus effecting a reform Forster had proposed, the capitation grant, a government bounty given to the officers commanding volunteer battalions whose amount was calculated by the number of men under their command. For it was an encouragement to enlist the largest possible number of men without regard to capacity or training, 'a premium on the enlistment of inefficients'.[1] In future the volunteers would receive pay fixed by the Government, and their officers would have no interest in their enlistment, their duties being confined to commanding and training the men. The system imposed upon the soldiers of the new territorial army was not however very severe. They would be enlisted between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four and be obliged to undergo for four years periods of training in camp which might extend to a fortnight but might be no longer than a week. A new provision made them liable to a light fine—only five pounds—if they wished to leave the force before the four years had expired. Moreover, they were encouraged but not compelled to join the rifle clubs, already very numerous, whose development the Government assisted by augmented grants, to practise shooting in the interval between their periods of training.

Above all, the new army differed from the old volunteer force in being organized. In the volunteers there had been above the battalions only a confused and incoherent grouping into brigades. Haldane organized his new Territorial Army in fourteen divisions, corresponding to the administrative districts created by Arnold-Forster with two additional Scottish divisions, one for the Lowlands, the other for the Highlands. It was easy to divide the Yeomanry into fourteen cavalry brigades. Under the conditions of enlistment in the Territorials there would be no difficulty in finding the material of an excellent body of engineers, equal, if not superior, to the corps attached to the regular army. It would not be so easy to provide the Territorial Army with the equipment and personnel of a good artillery, but the effort must be made. It must also be provided with a commissariat and a sanitary corps, in short must be made at least 'the skeleton'[2] of a real army.

[1] H. of C., 25 February, 1907, Haldane's speech (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxix, p. 1293).

[2] 'A skeleton organization. . . . You will, I think, have to resort to something of the

For this army Haldane wanted a force of three hundred thousand. If war broke out there could be no doubt that in the patriotic enthusiasm its declaration would arouse, the figure could be easily tripled by the influx of recruits eager to undergo as Territorials a six months' training. It was even likely that the Government would introduce conscription. The organization of the Territorial Army would be ready to receive the conscripts; in case of need, all the fit young men of Great Britain.[1]

9

His scheme once adopted, Haldane organized the propaganda necessary to win recruits for his new army. He made use of the press. A special department at the War Office supplied the papers with whatever news favoured his military policy.[2] The *Daily Mail* constituted itself his chief publicity agent and Haldane publicly thanked that great organ of popular imperialism for assistance which he had perhaps himself inspired.[3] He gained the confidence of *The Times* military correspondent, Colonel Repington, who without giving up his post on *The Times* accepted the semi-official position of editor of the *Army Review*. He also asked employers to encourage their workmen to enlist.[4] He took advantage of the industrial crisis which began about the end of 1907 and lasted over a year to call their attention to the value of the Territorial Army and still more the special reserve as employment for

kind if you are to have behind your striking force the certainty of a power of expansion.' (Ibid., vol. cliii, p. 678.)

[1] R. B. Haldane, address to the London Rifle Brigade, February 10, 1909: 'The question increasingly put to him was: "Why don't you ask Parliament to impose an obligation on all to serve for home defence?" He had sympathy with that question. He thought most people agree that as for the slacker, who simply amused himself and did nothing, the country would no doubt show what they thought of him. In all probability he would find a short and sharp Act of Parliament passed, if war broke out, compelling him to train himself, and do it in some inconvenient and unpleasant part of the country, when he would not have the prominence of the undoubted popular esteem which was given to the man who trained himself as a volunteer for the defence of his native land.' General Sir John French, speech at West Bromwich, March 22, 1913: 'He advised all those in favour of compulsory service to support the Territorial Army because, if ever their views came to prevail, compulsory service could be brought about with the present force by a mere stroke of the pen.'

[2] Arnold-Forster, *Military Needs and Military Policy*, p. 32 *n.*

[3] H. of C., March 7, 1910 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1910, 5th Series, vol. xiv, p. 1162).

[4] H. of C., October 21, 1908, Asquith's speech (ibid., 4th Ser., vol. cxciv, p. 1169).

the men thrown out of work.[1] He met indeed with discomfitures. For instance, when the historian, Fortescue, whom he had commissioned to study in the archives of the Foreign Office the military policy England had followed during her wars with republican and imperial France,[2] published a book which concluded with a panegyric of conscription[3] Haldane had recourse to a very unusual step for which he was severely criticized. He commissioned an officer of the high command, a member of the Army Council, General Sir Ian Hamilton, to refute the advocates of conscription and wrote the preface himself.[4] But his principal method of securing for his system the national support indispensable to its success was the Statute of 1907 itself and the administrative measures which accompanied it. It may be briefly described as the establishment of the governing classes in the very centre of his new organization, to act as its mainspring.

The Territorial Army, though divided into fourteen large divisions, was nevertheless organized on a county basis to appeal to the local patriotism so strong among the English. Forster had already contemplated such a county organization for his 'territorial militia'. Haldane carried it out for his Territorial Army. It is curious however to notice in what an ambiguous form he presented his plan in 1906.[5] 'There is', he declared, 'one school of thought which says that what you should do with our old constitutional forces is to extend them enormously, so that they shall be not merely a support to but an extension of the Regular Army. This school', he added, 'looks to the Lords-Lieutenant to give a new

[1] *War Office Advertisement for Recruiting for the Regular Army*, October 1908. See Arnold-Forster's protests, *Morning Post*, October 28, 1908, also *Military Needs and Military Policy*, p. 120. The Secretary for War resorted to even more blatant methods of advertisement. The Lord Mayor's Show on November 9, 1907, included a car filled with Territorials and Boy Scouts besides regulars.

[2] Lord Roberts, *Fallacies and Facts*, p. 29.

[3] *The County Lieutenancies and the Army, 1803–1814* p. 290. Fortescue after maintaining that England could not keep up her army in wartime without recourse to conscription added: 'Compulsion cannot be applied for service outside the British Isles.' Lord Roberts, however, quotes the phrase in a slightly different form and makes it read: 'Compulsion cannot *in peace* be applied for service outside the British Isles' (*Fallacies and Facts*, p. 30).

[4] *Compulsory Service: A Study of the Question in the Light of Experience*, by General Sir Ian Hamilton. With an introduction by the Rt. Hon. R. B. Haldane, Edition 1, November 1910; 2nd Edition with notes on the Admiralty view of the risk of invasion, January 1911. For the book and the circumstances under which it was published see the debates H. of C., March 13, 1911, Arthur Balfour's speech; March 14, 1911, Haldane's speech (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 1911, 5th Series, vol. xxii, pp. 1972–4, 2073 sqq.).

[5] H. of C., July 12, 1906 (ibid., 4th Ser., vol. clx, pp. 1112, 1116; *Army Reform and other Addresses*, p. 85. Cf. H. of C., February 25, 1907 (ibid., vol. clxix, p. 1304; *Army Reform and other Addresses*, pp. 124–5).

life to the Militia.' It was the school to which he himself belonged, and of which indeed he was in many respects the head. But he proceeded immediately to repudiate its principles, at least as regards the functions to be assigned to the Lords-Lieutenant. 'The Lords-Lieutenant', he stated, 'cannot discharge that function. For such a purpose they are as dead as the dodo.' This reassured the Radicals and Labour members. Haldane clearly did not contemplate placing the old county aristocracy at the head of his new army. But the declaration had no sooner been uttered, when, without any transition, the speech of the Secretary for War once more took an unexpected turn. He expressed his conviction that those whom he had a moment before treated as fossils could be resuscitated and military functions entrusted to the Lords-Lieutenant provided they were surrounded by a more democratic framework. Actually the first five clauses of the Act of 1907 set up in every county a 'county association' which should contain representatives of the County Councils and secretaries of trade unions and were empowered to offer the presidency to the Lord-Lieutenant. In fact, they always did offer it and the Lord-Lieutenant always accepted.

The scheme aroused some protests from the Radical and Labour benches. Sir Charles Dilke gave it an ironical welcome and refused to regard it as anything but a masterpiece of organized snobbery.[1] Ramsay MacDonald said it reminded him of a new edition of Disraeli's novels.[2] Was it befitting secretaries of trade unions to become, by joining these associations, recruiters for the army under the patronage of the aristocracy? Conservatives also

[1] H. of C., July 12, 1906, Sir Charles Dilke's speech: 'Lords-Lieutenant did not command implicit obedience on the other side of the House, and on his side they commanded none at all. The suggestion that it was necessary to have their patronage brought to his mind Miss Barrett Browning's description in *Aurora Leigh* of how upon some occasions Lords-Lieutenant cast down on those who lived in a lower sphere a kind of beaming influence which crushed out the tendency to vulgarity.' (Everything following the words 'none at all' has been suppressed in the official report. *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clx, p. 1136.)

[2] H. of C., April 23, 1907, J. R. MacDonald's speech: '. . . the county associations . . . would change the political and social centre of gravity in the country, and when in working order they would form a new nucleus of political and social influence. The right honourable gentleman seemed to have faced this modern problem with mediaeval ideas in his mind. Modern developments must be based on modern means; and the military scheme of the right honourable gentleman must have an industrial basis and not a basis which assumed the existence of the relations between the village and the hall. . . . The plan of county associations indeed was like an introduction or footnote to Beaconsfield's novels.' The jesting allusion to Lord Beaconsfield's novels has been omitted from the official report (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxii, p. 1592).

expressed apprehension. Surrounded as they would be by *nouveaux riches* to whom the old traditions of the gentry meant nothing, would it be wise of the Lords-Lieutenant to undertake functions which perhaps they might find themselves unable to fulfil honourably?[1] Nevertheless, his plan was adopted, and was more aristocratic in its final than in its original form: the County Councillors in the county associations were not the elected representatives of the County Councils but nominees of the Army Council. Nevertheless it proved a success. Throughout the country the associations were formed, flourished and even combined to form a vast national federation with its semi-official organ.[2] For more than half a century the landed gentry had been progressively dispossessed of local government and the Radical victory at the polls in 1906 had seemed likely to accelerate the process. Now however at one point Haldane's initiative had not merely slackened but reversed it. The landed gentry were invested with new functions of military local government.

When he instituted the County Associations and placed the Lords-Lieutenant at their head it was Haldane's intention to make use of the moral influence exercised by the landowners to attract into the Territorial Army and keep in it as many recruits as possible. How would these recruits, drawn from the lower classes, be provided with the officers they required? To provide officers for the reserve England had not at her disposal the sources of supply possessed by countries with a conscript army. It was to the upper middle class that she must look for volunteers to officer her territorial army. Why not appeal to the patriotism or, as Haldane dared to call it, the 'militarism', of the public schools?[3] For many

[1] William le Queux, *The Invasion of London*, 1906, Preface, p. xi: 'Under our twentieth-century social system, which has unfortunately displaced so many influencial and respected county families—everyone of which had military or naval members, relations or ancestors —by wealthy tradesmen, speculators and the like, any efficient county association will be very hard to create. Mr. Haldane's scheme is a bold and masterly sketch, but he will find it very hard to fill in the details satisfactorily.' So far as the Lords-Lieutenant are concerned, this social transformation had not yet been effected when Haldane prepared his Bill. After 1906 the Liberals began to make nominations calculated to change rapidly their social origins. (Lord Shuttleworth in Lancashire, Major-General H. F. Brocklehurst in Rutland, Sir William Brompton Gordon in Suffolk, Colonel Henry Cubitt in Surrey, Lord Nunburnholme in the East Riding of Yorkshire, Sir Hugh Bell in the North Riding.) But such nominations were still few, and since both parties had until 1906 respected the old traditions, on the eve of the Great War, members of old families were still at the head of almost all the counties.

[2] *National Defence*, the Organ of the National Defence Association, first number, November 1908.

[3] H. of C., February 25, 1907, Haldane's speech: '. . . We saw that there was only one

years games had been compulsory in these schools, and this not only because the masters wished to improve the boys' physique, but to foster that team spirit which in children is the germ of public spirit. But did public spirit thus understood differ very much from the military spirit?[1] Certain imperialists had appealed to these compulsory games as a proof that England was not so hostile to conscription as was commonly stated and believed.[2] Before imposing conscription on adults, they asked, why not at least introduce into the schools compulsory military training? Or

source from which we could hope to get young men of the upper middle class, who are the usual source from which this element is drawn, and that was the Universities and the big public schools, like Eton and Harrow, and other public schools of that character, which at present have large cadet corps. You are not in danger of increasing the spirit of militarism there because the spirit of militarism already runs fairly high both there and at the Universities' (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxix, p. 1321). It would seem that Sir Edward Grey speaking six weeks later in defence of the Bill wished to undo the effect produced by this gratuitously provocative language. He was at pains to dissipate 'the apprehensions that the scheme may create too much of a military spirit in the country . . . I do not believe it will . . . I would much rather use the phrase "public spirit" than "military spirit" ' (H. of C., April 9, 1907; ibid., vol. clxxii, p. 108).

[1] H. of C., July 12, 1906, Haldane's speech: 'The people of this country will not be dragooned into giving military service. Lord Cardwell used to say that, so far from being a nation of shopkeepers, the British were the most fighting nation on earth. I think that the interest of our people in military matters is probably more profound, more real and spontaneous than that of any other nation in the world. The keenness and the willingness of our people to give up time to volunteering and to the study of military organization is one of the striking features we have to deal with' (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clx, p. 1082).

[2] Rudyard Kipling's letter to *The Times*, December 11, 1903: 'What someone ought to point out now is that there exists in the average English public school a highly efficient system of conscription (for games) based: 1. On physical coercion of the young conscript. 2. On carefully educated public opinion of the conscripts' equals. Under this system the conscript is compelled between the ages of twelve and seventeen to put in some 2,500 hours of drill. If he comes up at ten and stays till he is eighteen, the total is nearer 4,000 hours. . . . By the time he is fourteen or sixteen the conscript under this system is set and keen; and if he isn't keen he is at any rate moderately efficient. Of course, this system could not be applied to the youth of all England without raising a horrible outcry. But we find it actually and smoothly at work in a minute section of the community, and it turns out annually, let us say, between seven and ten thousand boys trained to its standard.' He continues, 'Now, suppose that even 10 per cent. of the hours devoted to cricket and footer drills could be taken up for military drill and target work, wouldn't it be for gain? It couldn't come to much more than an hour and a half a week for thirty-six weeks, but in five or six years that would go far towards making a trained man' (*National Service Journal*, January 1904). Ten years later Kipling's suggestion was taken up by Lord Willoughby de Broke, who introduced a Territorial Force (Amendment) Bill which must be noticed, if only as a curiosity. It proposed to render national service compulsory for boys attending public schools; in other words, make conscription the privilege of young men of the upper classes (H. of L., March 12, 1914; *Parl. Deb.*, 5th Ser., Lords 1914, vol. xv, pp. 461 sqq.). On this point we may remark an agreement queer enough in all conscience between the views of Conservatives like Willoughby de Broke and those of the Labour party. Haldane had at first intended to organize military training in elementary as well as in secondary schools. It was due to pressure from the Labour members that he abandoned the former part of his scheme (H. of C., June 19, 1907, A. Henderson's speech, ibid., 4th Ser., vol. clxxvi, p. 532).

without going so far, why not encourage the development of voluntary associations already in existence for the military training of children and youths? We are not alluding to the Boy Scouts, a flourishing institution, which certainly tended to instil into children habits of military discipline but whose character was ambiguous and which denied that it was inspired by a military spirit in the strict sense of the term.[1] Nor do we refer to the Boys' Brigades founded by philanthropists for boys of the lower classes to train private soldiers, regular or territorial, rather than officers.[2] We are thinking of those cadet corps which came into existence for the first time in 1859 and 1860, a product of that violent explosion of gallophobia to which the modern volunteer movement owed its birth. Why should not the War Office give official recognition to these bodies, or at any rate to some of them? The idea had been considered before Haldane's arrival at the War Office but it would seem had been opposed by the departments and the professional soldiers. He took it up again and made a success of it. He formed an Officers' Training Corps for the public schools and Universities.[3] To every school and University a contingent of cadets was attached of a definite size which would be regularly affiliated to the Territorial force of the county and for which the War Office would provide, in addition to a fixed payment of five pounds per company, the necessary arms, ammunition, and instructors. The experiment succeeded. There were schools, Eton for example, which provided such a number of cadets that they assumed the appearance of preparatory schools for Sandhurst, nurseries of professional officers. And everywhere young amateur officers sprang up, ready to serve as regular officers, if the country were ever in danger. It is not easy in relating the moral history of a nation to estimate the strength of successive currents of ideas. There can be no doubt that after the end of the Boer War a very pronounced movement of anti-militarism arose in England. But

[1] We should notice the institution by the education committees of 'classes for Boy Scouts' in the elementary schools of certain counties, Lancashire first, then Surrey, then Kent (*Times Educational Supplement*, June 4, July 2, 1912).

[2] For certain attempts made before 1906 to attach the Boys' Brigades to the regular army by granting special privileges to members of a Brigade who enlisted see Arnold-Forster, *The Army in 1906*, 1906, pp. 157–8.

[3] See *The Special Army Order* of March 16, 1908, which put into execution the recommendation of a Committee of which Sir Edward Ward was chairman. The clause of the Act of 1907 which authorized Government grants to the cadet corps had been vigorously opposed by the Labour members. To satisfy them it had been necessary to provide that only boys above sixteen could benefit by a grant.

we must not forget that, on the one hand, the number of volunteers, continued under a new form as the Territorials, remained higher than it had ever been before that war, and that, on the other hand, the youth of the middle class displayed a knowledge of things military and a taste for them which had not been witnessed before. May not we conclude that pacifist opinion, though often more vocal, was also more superficial, and that the militarization of the nation and particularly of the governing classes,[1] if more silent, was more profound?

10

'We are a first-class Power, and we are apparently looking out for a first-class war. The Cardwell system was inaugurated at a time when our chief military problem was India. That is no longer the case. It is now in Europe.' These words were spoken in January 1909 by an English general in the course of a debate on the future of the army opened by Lieutenant-Colonel Repington.[2] In Europe—more precisely in Western Europe—on the frontier which divided Germany from France and Belgium. But nothing had been achieved if the Government were content to maintain its expeditionary force in England in a state of preparation without taking the necessary measures for its embarkation, the protection of its transports, its disembarkation, and immediate concentration at particular points arranged beforehand with the army of a prospective ally. Haldane had scarcely reached the War Office when he took the necessary steps.[3]

[1] See Haldane's remarks to Sir Almeric Fitzroy, March 14, 1910: 'As for his work at the War Office, he looks upon it as complete, and would be glad to hand the system he has created over to the Opposition, which, he believes, in combination with the County Associations, would at this stage do more to develop the Territorial organization than it is in his power to do. He spoke with great gratitude of the assistance he had received from his political foes, and regretted that it was not possible to do more State business by co-operation between the two parties' (*Memoirs of Sir Almeric Fitzroy*, vol. i, p. 395). A month earlier George Wyndham in a conversation with Wilfrid Blunt used language which justified Haldane's comments: 'The strength of the Tory position is that they and the King together command the whole material force of the country, besides half its voting strength. They have the money and the Army and the Navy and the Territorials, all down to the Boy Scouts' (Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries*, February 5, 1910, vol. ii, p. 299).

[2] *Aldershot Military Society: The Future of Army Organization*, by Lieut.-Col. C. A'Court Repington, January 27, 1909, p. 27.

[3] *British Documents* . . . vol. iii, pp. 170 sqq. Lieut.-Col. A'Court Repington, *The First World War*, 1920, vol. i, pp. 2 sqq.; D. S. MacDiarmid, *Life of Lieutenant-General Sir James Moncrieff Grierson*, 1923, pp. 213–29; Général Huguet, *L'Intervention militaire*

It would seem that the Anglo-French agreement of 1904 had hardly been concluded when the Committee of Imperial Defence studied the possibility of co-operation by the British army with a French army on the Continent. However guarded in form Lord Lansdowne's overtures to the French Government in April and May 1905, at the time of the Tangier crisis, undoubtedly the French statesmen interpreted them as opening the door to a military understanding between the two nations and it was for that reason that they aroused at Paris the panic of which we have spoken already. It is probable also that Admiral Fisher discussed the question during the following months with some Frenchman in high position. The project of an armed landing on the coast of Hanover under the protection of the British fleet, whose revelation in the *Matin* created such a stir, presumably originated with him. And finally it is probable that Lieutenant-Colonel Repington, a staff officer who on retiring from the army had become military correspondent of *The Times*, was an unofficial agent between the military authorities of the two countries during the concluding months of Unionist Government. But it was not until December after the fall of the Unionist Cabinet, when the German Government, possibly encouraged by the political crisis in England following as it did the revolution in Russia, seemed to be adopting a decidedly bellicose attitude that a *rapprochement* between the two armies was effected, outside the Cabinet to begin with. Commandant Huguet, the French military attaché, happened to meet General Grierson, the director of military operations, who informed him in confidence that the War Office was studying the measures which must be taken to despatch rapidly to the Continent an expeditionary force of more than a hundred thousand men. A few days later, Huguet repeated what he had heard to the journalist Repington, while expressing his fear that the new Cabinet might be less favourable to French interests than its predecessor. Repington questioned Grey on this point by letter and obtained a sufficiently reassuring answer to take it on himself in concert with two important members of the Imperial Defence Committee to open unofficial communications with Rouvier's

britannique en 1914, 1928, pp. 13 sqq.; Viscount Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty-five Years, 1892–1916*, vol. i, pp. 71 sqq.; Viscount Haldane, *Before the War*, 1920, pp. 28 sqq.; *An Autobiography*, 1929, pp. 189 sqq.; J. A. Spender, *The Life of the Right Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*, 1923, vol. i, pp. 248 sqq.; Lucien Wolf, *Life of the First Marquess of Ripon*, 1921, vol. ii, pp. 292–3.

Cabinet through the intermediary of Huguet. Rouvier, who had been terrified the previous spring by the offer of military assistance, now asked for it. Paul Cambon, who was on leave, was sent to London. On January 10 he asked Grey what would be the attitude of the British Government in the event of a war between France and Germany. Grey replied that he was not in a position to pledge the country to more than neutrality—a benevolent neutrality, if such a thing existed. Would Grey at least authorize unofficial conversations between the military and naval commands in readiness for an eventual alliance between the two Governments? He did not refuse, and if Cambon concluded that he did not disapprove of the suggestion, it was only because he put a favourable interpretation upon his silence.

The electoral campaign was in full swing and Grey passed half the week in his constituency. The Government did not yet know how large its majority would be, or even if it would secure a clear majority. It was presenting itself to the electorate with a programme of peace. For such a government the signature of a military convention with France would be a strange beginning. On the other hand, if unfortunately Germany declared war on France and England remained neutral, what an outburst of French wrath it would mean against '*la perfide Albion*', what a triumph for German policy! Grey did not know how to answer Cambon's request which he believed to come from Paris, whereas it originated ultimately with certain British officers and members of the Committee of Imperial Defence. After a public meeting in his constituency he took the opportunity to discuss the matter with Haldane, an imperialist like himself, and they agreed upon the reply to make to Cambon. Conversations between the general staffs would be authorized on the clear understanding that they would remain strictly technical and not commit the two Governments. The Prime Minister, who was in Scotland, and with whom Sir Edward Grey was obliged to correspond by post, showed little enthusiasm for the solution. 'It comes', he wrote to Lord Ripon, 'very close to an honourable undertaking. I do not like the stress laid upon joint preparations.' Nevertheless, he gave way. The elections were over and on January 31 Grey, fortified by the consent of the Premier and without taking the trouble to obtain the approval of the entire Cabinet, made known his acceptance, hedged round with elaborate restrictions, of Cambon's proposal.

Conversations, equally unofficial, were begun with the approval of the Foreign Office between the War Office and the Belgian War Office. For a German violation of Belgian neutrality was already expected to be the first act of a war perhaps imminent.[1] Thus on the very morrow of the advent of the Liberal Government the system of relations took shape between England and France which would continue until 1914. There was no treaty or alliance between the two Governments. Nor was there any military convention. But there was an *entente* which amounted, or almost amounted, to an alliance between Downing Street and the Quai d'Orsay, and an understanding between the War Offices of London and Paris of a more detailed character than many military conventions.

II

To realize this vast scheme of preparation for war required plenty of guile, but it was a quality of which Haldane had no lack. The organization of an expeditionary force whose destination was obvious to anyone who took the trouble to reflect, was calculated to alarm the pacifists in the Cabinet and the party. But it was accompanied by a number of measures, reductions of certain

[1] See in *The Times* of January 23 the article entitled 'The Low Countries'. It is, however, interesting to notice how fluctuating was the language of speakers in Parliament, at the very time when under Haldane's patronage co-operation between the three general staffs of England, France, and Belgium was being arranged. When on March 8, 1906, Haldane had explained for the first time in the Commons his plans for army reorganization, Arnold-Forster intervened to declare that the reserve was completely incapable of conducting on the Continent the war he obviously foresaw. 'Were we to fight for the neutrality of Belgium, if that should be our fate, outside these islands and take with us these bands of irregular troops?' (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cliii, p. 690). Immediately, a Liberal member protested: 'He hoped that it would never be suggested in this House, as it was sometimes suggested outside, that the friendly relations with France rendered us liable, if hostilities broke out between that Power and any other, to take any part in the operations which might ensue' (H. of C., March 8, 1906: ibid., vol. cliii, p. 745). And some months later Balfour's language was calculated to banish the supposition, envisaged by Forster and rejected by Guest, and recall the attention of the British public to India: 'The right hon. gentleman talked as if there was to be an expedition beyond the sea in which 154,000 men were to be straightaway embarked and transported off to some distant theatre of operations. The contingency requiring such an expedition might occur, but it is not very easy to imagine that it would. . . . We might be asked to land 150,000 men on the coast of Europe, but I do not know that I should sacrifice much money or take enormous pains so to organize my force that that could be done straightaway and immediately. What is required, so far as I am able to see, is the power of sending continuous reinforcements off to India in a great emergency. That does not mean sending 150,000 men straight off in a few weeks to Bombay' (H. of C., July 12, 1906, *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clx, pp. 1161–2).

categories of troops, and financial economies which aroused loud protests from the speakers and journalists of the Opposition and thus distracted the attention of the advanced Liberals. To the advocates of conscription on the one hand Haldane contrived to present his new Territorial Army as the utmost advance on the road to the organization of the 'nation in arms' to which the Parliament and country could be induced to consent. Therefore, though in 1906 they had given Haldane's policy an unfavourable reception, they became reconciled to it the moment it appeared in its true light, a policy not of excessive economies but of an indefinite development of the reserve forces under the patronage of the old aristocracy. In the words of Lord Roberts, who, however, did not discontinue his zealous campaign on behalf of compulsory military service, it was 'the greatest step forward in the direction of a great national army that had ever been made officially'.[1] To sincere Liberals, radical pacifists, and representatives of the working class on the other hand Haldane presented his system as an insurmountable barrier against conscription and the members of Parliament who from that quarter spoke and voted against the Bill were half-hearted in their opposition. After all, it was a force of volunteers. The individual was free to enlist or refuse to enlist. When we read the debates in the House of Commons on the army estimates during these years we receive the impression that the only questions which really interested the Labour members were whether the wages of the men employed in the national workshops would be raised, or whether on the plea of economy the number of men employed at Woolwich would be reduced.

Assured of the neutrality of the working class and the co-operation of the Conservative sections of the nation Haldane lost no time in carrying out his plan. On April 1, 1908, the statute was to come into operation as regards the Territorial Army. Six months earlier the King had received in public audience the Lords-Lieutenant of Great Britain, had expressed his satisfaction that duties they had once performed had been restored to them, and his conviction that they would fulfil their new responsibilities to the general satisfaction. A slump in industry favoured the recruiting of the regular army which had become the accepted refuge of the unemployed. A wave of indignation against Germany swept crowds of young men into the ranks of the Territorials. By the

[1] Speech at Birmingham, April 4, 1907.

end of 1908 their number had reached 188,000 officers and men The following summer, the King reviewed at Windsor after distributing their colours detachments from 108 units from every district in the country, industrial as well as agricultural. Of all the English counties Lancashire had given the best response to Haldane's appeal and in July 1909 King Edward presented its colours to the West Lancashire division which consisted of 16,000 men. At the beginning of 1910 the number of territorials had reached the figure of 276,000, nine-tenths of the maximum for which Haldane asked. Two years had then passed since Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's death, but by the beginning of 1908 Sir Henry's eyes had been opened to the truth that when he sent Haldane to the War Office it was not Haldane who had fallen into a trap. He had proved a most active and successful Secretary for War, indeed the only Secretary for War worthy of the name which England had possessed since Cardwell.

About the end of 1906 the rumour spread in Germany of the intimate discussions which had taken place between the English and French staffs. In the Senate Clémenceau replied to these rumours by a declaration whose form was so strange that it might well seem an avowal.[1] But not a single member of the House of Commons attempted to extract from the Government a denial or admission. Haldane and, after him, Campbell-Bannerman, reassured Metternich by stating categorically—which was true in the letter, if not in the spirit—that no military convention between England and France was in existence.[2] The German Government would appear to have accepted these declarations. Why was it satisfied so easily? Was it the presence at the War Office of Hal-

[1] 'How could I answer yes or no? . . . I have only been President of the Council for three weeks and . . . I have never heard anything of any document of the nature of that Anglo-French military convention you speak of. There are questions so framed that it is the first duty of a Government with any sense of responsibility to refuse to answer them (Senate, November 20, 1906). The British Press without distinction of parties seemed to have received orders to say as little as possible of what the *Daily News* of the 21st calls 'a curious expression' and the *Morning Post* of the 22nd Clémenceau's 'curiously lame' declaration.

[2] Count von Metternich to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, February 17, 1907 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxii[1], p. 125). This was the formula which Government speakers regularly used until the Great War. It may be thought however that Haldane exceeded the limits of permissible equivocation when speaking in the House of Lords on May 15, 1912, he stated that the 'friendship' between England and France had nothing to do with military questions, and repeated once more two years before the war the well-worn assurance which would have been true in 1900 that the object of the expeditionary force was not to fight near home on the Continent but to defend the distant possessions of the Empire (*Parliamentary Debates*, Lords, 1912, 5th Series, vol. xi, pp. 1037–8).

dane, 'a warm friend',[1] 'our only true friend',[2] that calmed German apprehensions? Up to a point yes; but the German attitude, and it is essential to understand this, was primarily determined by the fact that, if these disquieting rumours alarmed the diplomatists, they did not disturb the military experts. Bismarck was reported to have said that if a British army landed on the Continent he would send the police to arrest it.[3] And in the interval the Boer War had done nothing to restore the prestige of the British soldier in Germany. The German ambassador in Washington, reporting to Bülow a conversation he had just had with Roosevelt, represented the President as dismayed by his inability to discipline the American troops—'they desert sooner than obey'. 'Typically Anglo-Saxon,' was the Emperor's marginal comment, 'things are just the same in England.'[4] No doubt the German officers were convinced, like Lord Roberts, that without conscription the English could not think of challenging the German army, and equally convinced—and history down to 1914 would prove them right—that the English would turn a deaf ear to Lord Roberts's appeals.

[1] Count Metternich to Prince von Bülow, May 4, 1906: '. . . We have a warm friend in the English Minister for War, Mr. Haldane. He wrote to me a short while ago in a private letter what he has since repeated in conversation: "I hope the time has now come to establish the very best relations between our two countries. You know my attachment to yours." ' William II wrote on the margin: 'I don't believe it' (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxi[II], p. 426).

[2] Anonymous letter from London, February 15, 1907: '. . . In fact . . . the mass of the population here . . . wants war. The only true friend Germany possesses here and who is an outspoken opponent of war—Mr. Haldane cannot swim alone against the stream' (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxi[II], p. 487).

[3] Sir Ian Hamilton, *Compulsory Service*, p. 95.

[4] Baron Speck von Sternberg to Prince von Bülow, September 9, 1907 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxvi, p. 73). Cf. A report on the Territorial Army by (the) Captain (of a corvette) Seebolm, May 12, 1910: '. . . The young men lack the training given by compulsory service. The Territorial Army is a joke. When the men should have gone into camp, they struck and went home' (Tirpitz, *Politische Dokumente*, vol. i, p. 176). For the regular army see a report by the military attaché, Von Winterfeldt, who believed in the genuine existence of an agreement between the two staffs, written on February 7, 1911: 'On the question whether and when they would actually undertake this expedition across the Channel they have presumably not committed themselves. At present two important considerations militate against such a daring step on the part of the British army. In the first place their expeditionary force is still far behind other armies in its military training. This very year the English manœuvres produced an unfavourable impression upon my colleagues. The tactics, the handling of the troops, the staff arrangements, all betrayed an astonishing inefficiency, and the planning and execution of the manœuvres were wholly inadequate to modern requirements (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxix, p. 66 *n*). On the other hand one must not forget the opinion of General von Falkenhayn who opposed his compatriots' prejudice. 'We must not underestimate the British army: it is an army of subalterns' (Conrad von Hötzendorf, *Aus Meiner Dienstzeit*, vol. v, p. 819). Falkenhayn said this, it is true, on December 19, 1914, five months after the beginning of the war.

Were the Germans then not afraid of the martial power of Great Britain? And did the refusal of the English to listen to Lord Roberts prove that they did not take the German peril seriously? No. But on both sides the issue was not regarded as a military one. The English permitted their general staff to contemplate in readiness for all eventualities the despatch of an army to the Continent, but they cherished the hope that it would never come to this. In a moment of panic they might swell the enlistment of their Territorial Army to provide against the danger of a German invasion, as if that had been Haldane's intention in forming it. But the navy would ensure their safety, if only the necessary money were spent upon it and not wasted on a useless army, and whenever on a technical question of this kind an Englishman listened to a debate between a soldier and a sailor, he instinctively supported the latter. Once the first enthusiasm had ebbed, the numbers of the Territorial Army decreased every year, and the 'special reserve' yielded disappointing results.[1] We are thus led to study the essential problem, which was naval not military. If for some years England had been morally at war with Germany, the cause must not be sought in the War Offices of the two nations, nor yet, where many are inclined to look for it, in the intrigues of diplomatists. It must be sought in their admiralties and naval command. The true architects of the new balance of power at sea, and in consequence of the breach between England and Germany and the Triple Entente against the latter, were Tirpitz, Pelletan, and Togo.

III FISHER AND NAVY REORGANIZATION

I

The year 1905, though it witnessed the substitution of a Liberal for a Unionist Cabinet, marked no cleavage in the history of British naval policy.[2] In the early years of the new century it was

[1] Duke of Bedford, 'The Collapse of the Special Infantry Reserve' (*Nineteenth Century* January 1913, vol. lxxii, p. 199).

[2] For the history of the British navy during the years we are studying two excellent year books are available: (1) *The Naval Annual*, 1886 (and onwards) edited by Lord Brassey (afterwards by Lord Hythe). Besides chapters giving the comparative statistics for all the navies of the world it contains a number of special studies of particular problems relating to

determined by two factors. The first was the construction of a powerful German navy. This dated from the law of 1898, but more particularly from the law of 1900. The second was the violent reaction which followed in England at the conclusion of the Boer War, against an imperialist policy and the swollen navy and army estimates it had involved. Both these factors began to operate before the fall of the Unionists and both influenced the naval policy of the Unionist Government during its closing years. From now onwards, the Admiralty's new policy is embodied in a single individual, namely Sir John Fisher, to whom we cannot deny genius of a sort, even when we have read his strange memoirs.[1]

Born in Ceylon in 1841 of a family of soldiers—his enemies said he was not a genuine Englishman and that Asiatic blood flowed in his veins—and therefore already in his sixtieth year when the new century opened, he had behind him a long and brilliant career. After taking part in the Crimean War as a cadet, and in the Chinese campaign of 1869 as a midshipman, he had been responsible during the seventies for the establishment of a separate school of torpedo gunnery, at the head of which he was placed. In command for the first time of a man-of-war he had taken an important part in the bombardment of Alexandria and when placed at the head of the landing force his invention of the armoured train attracted the attention of the press and the public. On his return from Egypt, severely invalided, his work for years lay on dry land. But he continued to rise. He became Director of Ordnance and Torpedoes and Admiral Superintendent of Portsmouth Dock-

the navy, the work of British, and sometimes of foreign, experts. (2) *The Navy League Annual*—founded and edited by Allan H. Burgoyne, 1907 onwards, follows similar lines. For a comparison between the British and foreign navies see further the official document published annually since 1896, entitled *Fleets (Great Britain and Foreign Countries) Return to an Order of the Honourable the House of Commons for Return showing the Fleets of Great Britain, France, Russia. Germany, Italy, United States of America and Japan, distinguishing Battleships built and building; Cruisers built and building; Coast Defence . . . Vessels built and building; Torpedo Vessels; Torpedo Boat Destroyers and Torpedo Boats, built and building. Return to show Date of Launch, Displacement and Armaments reduced to one Common Scale.* Volume ii of Fred T. Jane's *The British Battle Fleet, its inception and growth throughout the Centuries to the Present Day* is easy to consult and well documented especially as regards the material of the fleet. See further: *England in deutscher Beleuchtung, Einzelabhandlungen herausgegeban von B. Thomas Lenschav*, Berlin 5. Heft. und Graf. E. Reventlow *Die englische Seemacht*, 1906. For the period immediately preceding that with which we are dealing see Sir William Laird Clowes, *The Royal Navy: A History from the earliest Times to the Death of Queen Victoria*, 1897–1901, vol. vii, 1903. H. W. Wilson, *Ironclads in Action: A Sketch of Naval Warfare from 1855 to 1895 with some account of the development of the Battleship in England*, with an introduction by Captain A. T. Mahan, 2 vols., 1st Edition, 1896, 5th Edition, 1897.

[1] *Memories* 1919; *Records* 1919. See further, for Lord Fisher's life and policy, Admiral Sir R. H. Bacon, *The Life of Lord Fisher of Kilverstone*, 2 vols., 1929.

yard. In 1892 he was made one of the Naval or Sea Lords, the four official expert advisers to the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Minister responsible to Parliament. He was the Third Naval Lord, naval construction was his province, and he won further laurels.

He then returned to sea and took command first of the British North American station, then after representing the Admiralty at the first Hague Conference—where we have already seen the spirit which inspired his attitude—he was placed in command of the Mediterranean fleet. His fame steadily grew, the achievement, in part of the demonic zeal he displayed in the performance of his duties, in part of the skill with which he contrived to create a body of supporters among the sailors. In the Mediterranean he arbitrarily formed a committee of those captains and commanders of his squadron whom he considered more intelligent than the others and readier to welcome innovations, giving them regular instruction in strategy, tactics, and seamanship and in turn asking them for the advice their experience could give. He thus made himself very unpopular with those excluded from this circle of confidants but won a corresponding devotion from the small number of the chosen, applying unflinchingly the maxim 'that favouritism is the essence of successful command'. Further he invited journalists to his table and for years had counted among his intimate friends publicists of such world-wide repute as W. T. Stead[1] and Arnold White. At the head of his circle of friends was no less a personage than King Edward, whose confidence he had contrived to gain and whom he amused by his extraordinary conversation, smoking-room stories interlarded with texts from the Bible, and from whom he secured the position of 'first naval aide-de-camp', despite the King's occasional alarm at Fisher's indiscreet advertisement of the very genuine friendship which united them.

While in command of the Mediterranean fleet he received a visit from Lord Selborne, the First Lord of the Admiralty, who falling a victim to his spell made him an Admiral and Second Sea Lord, a position which enabled him to dispose of the personnel of the navy. Then, after a brief interval during which he was Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth and, as we have already seen, assisted Lord Esher and Sir George Clarke to work out their

[1] It was Fisher who had inspired W. T. Stead's campaign in the *Pall Mall Gazette* which led to the introduction by the Government and the enactment of the Navy Defence Act of 1889 (Fred T. Jane, *The British Battle Fleet*, vol. ii, p. 61 *n.*).

scheme for reorganizing the War Office on the model of the Admiralty, he became First Sea Lord towards the end of 1904 on the anniversary, as his admirers liked to point out, of the Battle of Trafalgar. For seven years—if we reckon from his appointment, already a very important one, as Second Sea Lord, or five, if we reckon from November 1904, under three successive Prime Ministers, one Unionist and two Liberal—he was in fact the dictator of the Admiralty. By the new division of powers which he effected between the four naval members of the Board of Admiralty, by his dominating personality, and by cleverly organized advertisement, he secured a supremacy over this three colleagues which was alien to the traditions of the Admiralty and resembled the supremacy exercised at the War Office by the Commander-in-Chief, until on the advice of Fisher himself and because of the dangers that supremacy involved, the post had been abolished.[1]

[1] Lord Sydenham, *My Working Life*, p. 207. H. of C., March 6, 1905, Sir John Colomb's speech (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxlii, p. 478 sqq.): the speaker calls for the publication of the Order in Council supposed to have altered the division of powers at the Board of Admiralty. When on the following day, March 7, Gibson Bowles hinted that the reason why Lord Selbourne had left the Admiralty to become Governor of South Africa was that he could no longer tolerate Fisher's dictatorship (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxlii, p. 609) Lord Selborne published the document (*Board of Admiralty . . . Copy of Orders in Council, dated 10th of August 1904, showing designation of the various members of, and Secretaries to the Board of Admiralty and the business assigned to them*, 1905), and speaking in the House of Lords on the 21st undertook to prove, supporting his contention with ample evidence, that the Order in Council was not calculated to increase the authority of the First Sea Lord. Actually, the discipline of the navy and the promotion of officers below the rank of Commander were removed from his jurisdiction. His functions were restricted to examining special questions of naval policy. As to the final note which declared that 'in any matter of great importance the First Sea Lord is always to be consulted by the other Sea Lords, the Civil Lord and the Parliamentary or Permanent Secretary' and that it was the prerogative of the First Sea Lord to lay the matter before the First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Selborne maintained that it did no more than put into writing the accepted practice of the Board. He denied that it amounted to a declaration that the First Lord had no right to submit a question to the Board without the approval of the First Sea Lord. The first argument is plausible but Lord Selborne omitted to state that the Order in Council gave the First Sea Lord authority to make decisions concerning 'the fighting and sea-going efficiency of the Fleet' which gave him an extraordinarily strict control over the Third Sea Lord, who had charge of the material of the navy. The second argument is also plausible. But on the one hand, to transform a custom into a written rule was certainly to give it new weight, a dangerous step, if it were not intended to increase the functions of the First Sea Lord, at a moment when the position was held by a man of such powerful personality as Admiral Fisher. And is it so certain that when Lord Selborne denied that it had been his intention when he signed the note to deprive the First Lord of all power or initiative, he was not protesting against the interpretation Fisher actually gave to the Order in Council of August 10, 1904? (Lord Tweedmouth, H. of C., July 4, 1907 (*Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., vol. clxxvii, p. 834). A. Lawrence Lowell (*The Government of England*, vol. i, pp. 92–3), though writing three years after the Order in Council of August 10, 1904, describes the respective functions of the four 'Naval Lords'; he does not employ the new terminology 'Sea Lords', as though they were still defined by the Orders in Council of 1872 and 1882.

The statements of principle which appeared over the signature of the responsible ministers had been presented to them by Fisher and drawn up previously under his direct supervision. He made himself chairman of the Commissions whose advice he pretended to ask and dictated their reports. In what did the 'naval revolution' consist of which he boasted himself the author? In three things: rejuvenation of methods, redistribution of squadrons, and the creation of the Dreadnought.[1]

2

It was when occupying the position of Second Sea Lord from the summer of 1902 to the autumn of 1903 that Fisher tackled the problem of bringing methods up to date. During the last half century the navy had undergone a revolution, which was the counterpart of the Industrial Revolution effected by the introduction of machinery. About the middle of the nineteenth century the British navy, the model of other navies, was still what it had been in the days of Nelson. The object in view, when a decision was sought, was a combat at close quarters. All the guns on one side of the man-of-war were directed upon the enemy's ship and if its rigging was successfully smashed and its bridge set on fire, the ship, thus reduced to a state of inferiority, was boarded. The seaman's entire art, whether he sought or evaded a grapple, consisted in such skilful handling of the sails that the wind which he could not control brought him as near as possible to the goal in view. Now there were no longer masts or sails on men-of-war, which depended no longer on the wind but on steam power to overtake or elude the foe. And, on the other hand, the artillery had become a scientific piece of mechanism which the gunners

[1] For a general account of Sir John Fisher's reforms see the panegyric by Archibald S. Hurd, *British War Fleets, The New Scheme of Reorganization and Mobilization with Special Reference to the Growth of the German Navy . . . with Full List of the Fleets and Squadrons at Sea and their Strategical Disposition; the Ships in Commission and in Reserve; and Details of Vessels struck off the War List*, 1905. See also the equally enthusiastic articles by Arnold White: 'Can we trust the Admiralty?' (*National Review*, March 1906, vol. xlvii, pp. 68 sqq.) and Archibald S. Hurd: 'Progress or Reaction in the Navy' (*Fortnightly Review*, April 15, 1906; vol. lxxix n.s, pp. 707 sqq.), also the critical article 'Admiralty Policy and the Manning of the Fleet' by 'Apex' (*United Service Magazine*, February 1906, vol. xxxii, pp. 516 sqq.), and Admiral Lord Charles Beresford's violent attack, *The Betrayal. Being a Record of Facts concerning Naval Policy and Administration from the Year 1902 to the Present Time*, 1912.

must know how to handle so that shots discharged from a moving platform might reach, at a range of several miles, an adversary equally mobile. Nor was machinery necessary only to navigate the vessels and bring the guns into position. Steam engines were also required to operate the steering apparatus and the dynamos, and electrical engines to work the ammunition loaders and transmit the commander's orders, hydraulic machines for the watertight chambers, machines of compressed air to work the torpedoes and for other purposes and refrigerators to keep the temperature of the store rooms cool. A competent witness writing in 1910 estimated at a hundred at least the pieces of machinery installed on a battleship of the most recent type.[1] The man-of-war had become a gigantic factory whose first need was a large number of trained mechanics.

But this 'revolution' whose results were so striking had taken place without the vessels thus transformed being subjected to the test of action. The Crimean War which had occurred too early and moreover had involved no fighting on a large scale, had provided an opportunity only for the first experiments with iron and steam. A few years later, still in the early days of the new equipment, the American War of Secession had been the occasion of a number of mechanical experiments which had made a considerable impression on public opinion. But it had been a flash in the pan. On the restoration of peace the American navy relapsed into insignificance. After this the important struggles were fought on land and the decisive event of the succeeding half century was the rise of a great land power which possessed no fleet. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that England, faced with such navies as the French and Russian against which she judged it prudent to arm but which at bottom she despised, delayed to face the question whether this revolution in the construction of men-of-war did not demand an equally thoroughgoing revolution in the professional training of their crews.

In high quarters the belief prevailed that, for officers and men alike, the old method of instruction employed during the 'great war' which opened the century and which consisted essentially in the manipulation of sails was the training required to turn out a sailor. Any other method was suspect, as in the schools any

[1] Frank Fox, *Ramparts of Empire: A View of the Navy from the Imperial Standpoint*, 1910, p. 122.

attempt to modernize the curriculum was suspect to the defenders of the classical tradition.[1] It required the new naval policy of Germany and in particular the law of 1900 to provoke a sudden reaction of British public opinion. Taken by surprise, England suddenly awoke to the fact that here too she must copy the German model. No one was better fitted than Fisher to become the mouthpiece of the movement. In the instruction he gave to his subordinates in the Mediterranean he emphasized the two factors on which in his opinion victory depended, the speed of the ship and the accuracy of her gunnery, and it was this instruction which had impressed Lord Selborne so favourably and placed Fisher in 1902 at the Admiralty.

A serious problem preoccupied the officers of the fleet. As the men-of-war were mechanized the number of engineers and the importance of their functions continued to increase. But they were not in the strict sense of the term officers. They formed a category apart, with a special organization, and distinguished externally by details of uniform. Not only did they form a distinct branch of the service, they entered it from a special school which drew its boys from an inferior social class. And the career of a naval engineer was not only a distinct career from that of a naval officer but it was comparatively without prospects, since its highest rank was on a level with that of a captain. However important their functions might be the engineers were not regarded as 'executive officers'. They belonged to the civil not the executive branch of the service and were incapable of holding a command. However great the personal merit of an engineer, however long his period of service, he had no hope of seeing himself an officer. The genuine officer was the man who controlled the conduct of an engagement by his orders given in the open air, on the poop. In the old days of sailing ships the captain had fraternized with all the members of his crew, whatever their rank. Now the engineers were nothing but automata, invisible and blind instruments of his will. But the engineer, the Caliban of the officers' corps, began to revolt against the Prospero of the upper deck. He observed that many officers, those for instance in the gunnery department, were scarcely less mechanics than himself and passed their lives

[1] See the debates on this subject in the House of Commons, June 26, 1900 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. lxxxiv, pp. 1128–9), and the discussions at the Royal United Services Institution on June 20 and 28 following an address by J. R. Thursley entitled 'The Training of Seamen' (*The Times*, June 21, July 2, 1900).

on board under conditions very similar to his own. He demanded the privileges and standing of the executive officer. And the problem of status was further complicated by the presence in the British navy of a body of marines, who formed an element apart. The marines composed landing parties, were responsible for a portion of the gunnery on board ship, and fulfilled a further function, not calculated to make them popular, the maintenance of discipline on board. They made the composition of a naval crew still more heterogeneous. If it were thought desirable to weld the crews into a homogeneous body, why not—since the problem of the engineers pressed urgently for solution—settle at the same time the problem of the marines? This was what Fisher attempted within six months of his arrival at Whitehall, in his capacity at Second Sea Lord in charge of the personnel.[1]

He revolutionized the entire system by which officers were recruited and trained. To make the recruiting of officers easier was an urgent necessity when the number of sailors had risen in fifteen years from 60,000 to 120,000. The need for officers had in fact become so acute that it had been found necessary to supply it by giving commissions wholesale to reserve officers from the merchant service. The experiment which had been made of raising the age for joining the navy in the hope of getting young men on leaving their public schools had not proved a success and Fisher reduced from sixteen to twelve the age at which a future naval officer began his career. But if they were taken at such an early

[1] For this reform of Sir John Fisher's see *Navy (Personnel) Memorandum dealing with the Entry, Training and Employment of Officers of the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines*, December 16, 1902; *New Scheme of Naval Training: Selection of Candidates for Nomination as Naval Cadets, Further Report of Members of the Interview Committee*, March 20, 1905. For the results obtained in three years see *A Statement of Admiralty Policy*, November 30, 1905. A lecture given by Commander H. Orpen on November 28, 1902—that is to say, some weeks before the publication of Lord Selborne's memorandum, published in *The Times* of November 29, 1902, under the title 'The Origin, Evolution and Future of the British Navy' amounts to an excellent sketch of Fisher's plan. For the criticism which the plan provoked in the navy see Dubitator, 'The Admiralty Scheme' (*United Service Magazine*, February 1903, vol. xxvi, New Series, pp. 466 sqq.), and Vice-Admiral C. C. Penrose Fitzgerald, 'The Admiralty Scheme': the new Regulations for the Entry and Training of Naval Officers (*United Service Magazine*, February 1903, vol. xxvi, n.s. pp. 586 sqq.). For the career of an English naval officer at the end of the nineteenth century see the interesting article 'The Navy as a Profession,' by Captain R.N. (*National Review*, January 1899; vol. xxxii, pp. 700 sqq.), and after the reform Frank Fox, *Ramparts of the Empire: A View of the Navy from an Imperial Standpoint*, 1910, pp. 179 sqq. See further two interesting articles, one dealing with the engineers by Sir William H. White, 'The Education and Training of Engineers: Civil and Naval' (*Nineteenth Century*, June 1906; vol. lix, pp. 1022 sqq.), the other with the marines, S.P.Q.R., 'The Past and Future of the Royal Marines; as indicated in "A Statement of Admiralty Policy" ' (*United Service Magazine*, February 1906, vol. xxxii n.s, pp. 524 sqq.).

age how could the navy be sure of obtaining the most suitable boys? Must the choice be left to the arbitrary decisions of the higher command, in other words to favouritism and personal influence? At the opening of the twentieth century it was impossible to advocate such a system openly. Must they then institute a competitive examination? The method surely of pedantic mandarins, and almost barbarous in its intellectual rigour if applied to these children. A compromise was devised. A Committee was set up on which a representative of the teaching profession had a seat with the admirals, the bigwigs of the navy, whose task it was to 'interview' candidates, the object of these interviews, which were to be as informal as possible, being to make sure of their moral and mental fitness. The Committee drew up a list of the most suitable from which the First Lord of the Admiralty made his choice.

For four years the boys were to be given the same education, whatever branch of the service they would join later. Promoted to the rank of midshipmen they would continue in that capacity this common education, but on board ship instead of on land. At the end of three years, on passing an examination, they would become acting sub-lieutenants and receive in common special courses of instruction, at Greenwich for three months, at Portsmouth for six. Only then at about the age of twenty would they be divided—as far as possible in accordance with personal preference—into distinct groups and receive special training as executive officers, engineers or marines. The 'new system' of training officers was marked by the following features. In the first place the instruction was extremely technical, and so urgent was the need for technical training that this aroused no protest. Already, a year before the new programme had been worked out, instruction in the handling of sails and rigging had been abolished and the officers who directed the firing of the guns and the launching of the torpedoes had been made responsible for the mechanism of the weapons they employed. Secondly, and this was a bolder step in an age of specialization, the same instruction was given as long as possible to all the pupils. This made it possible later on to employ engineers, gunners and executive officers as torpedo gunners. And all alike, once they had reached the rank of commander, had the same opportunities of promotion in the hierarchy of officers of the executive branch and were equally eligible for all posts including

command at sea. The policy of the Board of Admiralty—in other words Fisher's—was to create 'a body of young officers who at the moment of mobilization for war will be equally available for all the general duties of the Fleet and to consolidate into one harmonious whole the fighting officers of the Navy'.[1]

Less than nine months after the publication of the new scheme the Crown put a mansion in the Isle of Wight at the temporary disposal of the Admiralty for the education of the new cadets until the building in course of construction at Dartmouth could be opened. The experiment so vigorously begun was tenaciously pursued, at least as regards the executive officers and the engineers. For in the case of the marines *esprit de corps* prevented the application of the 'new system'. What are we to think of the results? There were critics who, judging the scheme from the point of view of technical efficiency, while they recognized the advantages which would accrue to officers from knowledge of the machinery amid which their entire professional career would be spent, were afraid that the engineers whose special training was delayed would be less efficient than they had been under the old system.[2] There were others who, adopting the social standpoint, doubted whether the scheme was so democratic as its authors made out.[3] What guarantee was there that the choice of the Interview Committee which declared candidates eligible for Dartmouth was determined by their personal merit and that the Committee did not instinctively select boys who belonged by

[1] Memorandum of December 16, 1902 *sub finem*. The final sentences which follow read like the professional expert's challenge to Parliament: 'Difficulties there doubtless will be in carrying this part of the scheme into full effect, but those difficulties have been foreseen and they will be met. The advantage to the Navy of the realization of the scheme will be inestimable and permanent; the difficulties will be secondary and transient. *The Board are conscious that on them alone rests the responsibility, and they alone have the advantage of knowing all the conditions which govern the problem.*'

[2] H. of C., May 24, 1906, Bellairs' speech and replies by Arthur Lee and E. Robertson (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clvii, pp. 1461 sqq., 1471 sqq., 1747 sqq.). 'Whatever good effects the new plan may have in other directions, it can hardly increase materially the scientific education of the cadet' (A. Lawrence Lowell, *The Government of England*, vol. i, p. 104 *n.*).

[3] For Fisher's intentions see his *Memories*, p. 201: '. . . This democratic country won't stand 99 per cent *at least* of her Naval Officers being drawn from the Upper Ten. . . . It's amazing to me that anyone should persuade himself that an Aristocratic Service can be maintained in a Democratic State. The true democratic principle is Napoleon's "*La carrière ouverte aux talents.*" The Democracy will shortly realize this, and there will be a dangerous and mischievous agitation. The secret of successful administration is the intelligent anticipation of agitation.' But this was written in his old age, after the Great War of 1914, and is an admission that the reform of 1902 had not when he wrote made the officers of the British navy a democratic body.

birth to the wealthy and governing class? The training, at Dartmouth first, then during those later years when the young man served as a midshipman, alone cost his parents a hundred, perhaps a hundred and fifty pounds a year.[1] There were no scholarships for boys of humble origin. They spoke of democratizing the naval officers by breaking down the barrier which divided them from the engineers. The barrier was indeed broken down but it was by making the engineers an aristocratic body.

3

This reform excited such interest that less attention was paid to others which concerned not the officers but the crews. But they had their importance. Here also the navy had to be adapted to the new demands of a century not even of steam but of electricity.

Indeed, a year before Fisher's influence had begun to be felt at the Admiralty instruction 'in the rigging' had been abolished for the sailors as well as the officers. The South African War had provided a pretext for replacing the four sailing vessels which served as training ships by four cruisers. In default of training ships it became necessary to organize a new system of training for future sailors. In future all would receive elementary instruction in mechanics, and be given some knowledge of stoking. And all could be taught the rudiments of gunnery. Since this instruction did not, like the older training, promote the physical development of its subjects, gymnastic exercises were instituted. In this case a method was followed in some respects the reverse of that pursued in training the officers. Specialization from childhood was considered beneficial and a body of boy artificers was formed who would be trained in mechanics from the age of fourteen, four years that is to say before their admission into the navy. And the examinations, which after two years on board made an ordinary seaman an able seaman, would no longer be, as they had been hitherto, a mere formality. The good effects of this modernization were quickly felt. When the twentieth century opened the low standard of its gunnery was a disgrace to the British navy. Within a few years, it would seem, the defect had been made good. In 1909 Admiral Fisher mentioned with pride the example

[1] H. of C., May 24, 1906, Bellairs' speech (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clvii, p. 1463).

of a large ironclad which during some gunning practices hit fifteen times out of eighteen a target fourteen times smaller than itself and at a distance of five miles, the vessel moving at a rate of twenty knots, the target at an unknown speed.[1]

At the same time, even before Fisher reached the Admiralty, far-reaching alterations were made in the system of enlistment. Since the abolition of the press gang in 1852 the necessary number of men had been obtained by enlistments termed 'continuous', nominally for twelve years, actually for thirteen or fourteen. For the twelve years' enlistment was commenced at the age of eighteen, when the young sailors had already been serving for two or even two and a half years as 'boys'. When the twelve years had expired, the sailor was urged to re-enlist for a further period of ten years. That the Admiralty should abandon this system of enlistment for a very lengthy term was obviously out of the question; for it secured men in sufficient numbers and of excellent quality. But doubts had begun to be felt whether, in view of the constant increase in the number of sailors, sufficient men would always be found and the example of the German navy proved that first rate crews could be secured in which the majority of the seamen were enlisted or actually served for a shorter period.[2] And all the posts on board need not be filled by perfectly trained seamen. It was therefore decided in 1900 to institute a new class of enlistment, nominally for twelve years but providing that at the end of seven years the men should enter the reserve. In a navy entirely manned by 'volunteers' and where, when the term of enlistment had expired, the sailor could not be legally compelled to re-enlist, the new system offered the advantage of forming a body of reservists whose numbers were thus kept up automatic-

[1] Letter to Lord Esher, August 27, 1907 (*Memories*, p. 192).

[2] See the curious anecdotes collected by Tirpitz to show the astonishment inspired by the 'military' discipline of the German crews. 'When in the year 1873 an English lady at Gibraltar saw on board the *Friedrich Karl* our sailors already, as still at the opening of the World War, superior, I am convinced, to the British she exclaimed in surprise "Don't they look just like sailors?" and when I asked what ever else they should look like, replied firmly: "But you are not a seagoing nation" ' (*Erinnerungen*, p. 10). And again: 'I remember the astonishment expressed by English officers when in Malta in 1890 we lay in our old hulks close to the modern vessels of the British and our men were working like slaves, hard at it the entire day. If, they said, their own men were asked to work so hard, they would mutiny. They simply couldn't understand such hard labour, especially since, owing to the short term for which a German sailor serves, it could not be fully utilized. In the park at Osborne last year a detachment of our marines paraded before the Queen. British naval officers remarked in astonishment, "The men are soldiers." Their impression was not altogether correct but it was significant' (ibid., p. 16).

ally.[1] It was called the Royal Fleet Reserve and it supplemented the Royal Naval Reserve already forty years old, which was recruited by the voluntary enlistment of sailors in the merchant service and which could not guarantee under all circumstances the supply of men necessary to keep the crews at full strength during war. The institution of this new type of enlistment had the additional advantage of making it possible to effect considerable economies. The high rates of pay which must be given to the men enlisted for a long term and to those who renewed their enlistment need not be given to such a large number. On the other hand, the additional expenditure on the Royal Naval Reserve which would become necessary, if its numbers were increased, was avoided.

Once again, this last reform was not Fisher's work. But he was its convinced advocate and did his utmost to strengthen the Royal Fleet Reserve by extending the system of Non-continuous Service. For the new method of enlistments suited his system admirably and facilitated decisions of a sensational character taken about this time by the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Board of Admiralty, and in particular after the close of 1904 by its autocrat. They concerned not the personnel but the material of the navy.

4

When we were relating the history of British imperialism at the close of the Boer War we saw how the first Navy Estimates of the post-war period reached an enormous figure: £35,476,000, an increase of £4,306,000 over the preceding year. Three ironclads and four armoured cruisers were laid down. But the current of public opinion was flowing in a direction which soon convinced the Unionist Government that its position had not been strengthened but weakened by the conclusion of a victorious peace in South Africa, that the country considered that the war had cost

[1] In conformity with the report of a Committee of inquiry *Naval Reserves, Report of the Naval Reserves Committee*, January 20, 1903 (Sir Edward Grey's Committee); cf. *A Statement of Admiralty Policy*, November 30, 1905, pp. 20–1. See also on the problem of reserves H. of C. March 21–2, 1901 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. xci, pp. 806 sqq., 934 sqq.), and the excellent article signed 'Apex' and entitled 'Admiralty Policy and the Manning of the Fleet' (*United Service Magazine*, February 1906; vol. xxxii, New Series, pp. 516 sqq.). For the Royal Naval Reserve which was also reorganized by Fisher see Frank C. Bowen, *History of the Royal Naval Reserve*, 1926.

too dear, and would not be placated by a victory which resulted in a further increase of armaments. If the Navy Estimates in 1904 were higher than in the previous year—£36,830,000, an increase of £1,354,000, it was because two completed ironclads had been bought from the Government of Chile to prevent their purchase by Russia, then at war with England's ally Japan. As a result of the purchase, two cruisers only would be laid down instead of three, which encouraged the hope of considerable economies in future years. Actually, the Navy Estimates in 1905 amounted only to £33,389,000, a reduction of £3,500,000 on the previous year. Only one cruiser was laid down. Then Lord Cawdor succeeded Lord Selborne at the Admiralty and while continuing a policy of economy—the estimates he prepared at the close of 1905 effected a reduction of £1,500,000 as compared with 1904—proposed to incur further expenditure during the following years by laying down four ironclads. The Liberals who took office at this juncture deleted from the programme one of the four ironclads and protested against the attempt of a falling Government to force their hands. Moreover Campbell-Bannerman declared himself authorized to state that in reducing the programme of naval construction contemplated by Lord Cawdor, far from overruling the Board of Admiralty he acted with their assent.[1] The Board therefore possessed a definite policy, which for a little over a year had been the policy of the First Sea Lord, and which sought to increase the 'efficiency' of the British navy while reducing expenditure. What had been Fisher's object ever since he reached high command? To impress upon his superiors and subordinates alike the absurd situation of the British navy, loath to abandon its traditions and therefore clinging to the methods of the sailing vessel when there was no longer a single sailing ship in the fleet, a single sail in the new men-of-war. But what ideal should an Admiral, a Sea Lord, pursue in an industrialized navy? The ideal always pursued by the inventor of a machine, to obtain the same or better results at a lower cost. It was obvious in particular that the enormous increase in the speed of warships due to the invention and progress of steam navigation, and the marvellous and growing ease of communication, by telegraph first, then by wireless telegraphy, were reducing the size of the earth. It was natural that Britain to protect her vast mercantile marine and to link up the different parts

[1] H. of C., July 27, 1906 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxii, p. 115).

of the immense empire had multiplied her naval stations and amply furnished them with ships. But was it any longer necessary to maintain so many ships when faster vessels to which, moreover, it was easier to give the alarm, could be despatched more freely at a signal to any point on the globe? Fewer ships and fewer naval stations would suffice. As soon as Fisher became First Sea Lord he used the broom vigorously, and his success in sweeping away sources of unnecessary expenditure was the true reason why the Navy Estimates declined in 1905 and the succeeding years.[1] In the first line alone no less than 130 were given up within a few months.

Fisher proposed to confront foreign nations with a navy formidable rather by the quality than by the number of its ships. What then became of the standard, strictly quantitative, which for the last fifteen years had determined the supposed needs of the British Admiralty, the 'Two-Power Standard'? For the last fifteen years, for during the greater part, indeed almost the whole of the nineteenth century, the Admiralty had applied a different standard. Then only one other navy counted for anything, namely, the French, and England was therefore content in peacetime with a fleet one-third larger than the French. It was not until 1889 that the First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord George Hamilton, had asked for a navy equal to, if not slightly larger than, the two strongest foreign navies. Which were they?[2] At a moment when Russia was developing her navy and the Franco-Russian alliance was taking shape, no one had any doubt. Four years later when the Unionists vociferously demanded that the Liberal Government of the day should undertake a new programme of naval construction on a large scale their speakers put forward plainly the Franco-Russian peril and the Secretary to the Admiralty agreed that the minimum strength of the British navy must be equal to the combined navies of France and Russia.[3]

[1] For this policy of cleansing the navy see Pretyman's speech, H. of C., March 6, 1905 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxlii, pp. 438 sqq.).

[2] H. of C., March 7, 1889: Lord George Hamilton indeed presented the principle as that which the Government had already been applying for several years. 'I have endeavoured during the past year to study the speeches of those who in previous years have held my position, and that of Prime Minister, so as to ascertain what was the permanent idea underlying their utterances when they spoke of the standard of strength on which our naval establishment should be maintained. I think I am correct in saying that that idea has been that an establishment should be on such a scale that it should at least be equal to the naval strength of any other two countries' (*Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. cccxxxiii, p. 1171). Cf. H. of C., same sitting, Lord Charles Beresford's speech (ibid., p. 1203).

[3] H. of C., December 19, 1893, speeches by Lord George Hamilton, Arthur Balfour, Admiral Field, Macfarlane, Gibson Bowles, and Joseph Chamberlain and the statement by

We must however inquire how the Admiralty interpreted the Two-Power Standard. The British fleet had to fulfil three purposes—to fight a hostile navy, protect the mercantile marine, safeguard communications between the various parts of the empire. But it was only the first of these which the Two-Power Standard had in view. It was applied only to the ironclads, the battleships. The cruisers intended to serve the two other purposes might be built in unlimited numbers. But could this distinction between the battleship and the cruiser be maintained any longer now that the armoured cruiser had been invented? It was in the estimates for 1897 that there appeared for the first time six armoured cruisers of the Cressy type replacing the large cruisers simply 'protected' for which the budgets immediately preceding made provision. Their displacement was 12,000 tons, their length 440 feet, they carried two 9.2 inch B.L. guns, twelve 6 inch Q.F. guns. the armour plating attained in the middle of the vessel a thickness of six inches, their horse-power was 21,000 and their speed 21 knots. It was a speed equal to that of protected cruisers of the 'Powerful' type, but the new cruisers were armoured and their armouring was superior to that of the oldest ironclads the Admiralty still kept in commission. In short they were cruisers in their speed but the protected cruisers were powerless against them. They were not simple cruisers but real men-of-war. The Cressys were followed by the Drakes, and these by the Counties. Then after these two experiments came the Devonshires which hardly differed in speed, armour or armament from the Cressys.[1] In four years a revolution had taken place. The British fleet in 1900 did not contain a single armoured cruiser. At the end of 1905 it possessed twenty-six. All the calculations of the Two-Power Standard were thus falsified. Many Liberal members of Parliament argued, and their contention was never satisfactorily refuted,

the representative of the Government, Sir U. Kaye Shuttleworth (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. xix, pp. 1775, 1810, 1822, 1828, 1837, 1856, 1873). See especially Lord George Hamilton's and Arthur Balfour's speeches and Lord Charles Beresford's memorandum of November 18. Some years later, when the *entente* in the Far East between France, Germany and Russia suggested more dangerous eventualities than a Franco-Russian alliance it was even questioned whether the Two-Power Standard would suffice to ensure the safety of the country (H. of C., March 5, 1897, Sir Charles Dilke's speech; ibid., vol. xlvii, pp. 68–9).

[1] Fred T. Jane, *The British Battle Fleet*, vol. ii, pp. 1101 sqq. The Drakes were larger (14,000 tons) and faster (23 knots), the Counties smaller (9,800 tons) and of much the same speed as the Drakes. The Devonshires, slightly smaller (10,850 tons) than the Cressys were not quite so strongly armed (their largest guns were 7.5 inches) and their speed was distinctly less than that of the Drakes and Counties.

that the British navy was numerically superior not only to two but to the three most powerful foreign navies.[1] But in fact when we read the lengthy debates which took place in the House of Commons in 1904 and 1905 on the question of the Two-Power Standard we receive the impression that the politicians at the Admiralty had lost their bearings and were uncertain whether to defend the standard or represent it as obsolete. 'I think', stated Lord Selborne in the House of Lords, 'I shall carry your Lordships with me when I say that you cannot compare with any reason or fairness the naval expenditure of this country with that of any two or more Powers, because what our navy has to do is totally different from what the navies of any one, two or three other Powers have to do.'[2] Also Lord Goschen: 'The Two-Power Standard is gone. It is no longer applicable to the state of Europe. . . . As long as changes continue in the balance of naval power and in the fleets of other countries, it is impossible for the Admiralty to lay down any fixed standard.'[3] What in truth was left about 1905 of the Franco-Russian peril?

The French navy was still the most powerful in Europe after the British. But if it was numerically the strongest, its prestige did not stand high. The inventive genius of its engineers was universally recognized. But the caprices of Parliamentary committees and the effects of Cabinet crises had made it a navy built on no uniform plan, what was called in jest a fleet of samples, and since 1902 under the Pelletan government it had still further deteriorated. Not only did the French Admiralty anticipate the wishes of the British by giving up the construction of great ironclads and

[1] H. of C., August 4, 1904, Edmund Robertson's speech: '. . . At the present time, from the report in his hand, he saw that we had battleships of the first class, 49; the next three Naval Powers—France, Germany, and Russia—had 50 and all the other navies of the world 80. That was a Three-Power Standard. We had five-sixths of the battleship strength of all the rest of the world. In armed cruisers we had 28; France, Germany, and Russia 27; and the rest of the world 42. Here again there was a Three-Power Standard. In protected cruisers of the first class we had 21; France, Germany, and Russia 13; and the other navies of the world, 16. In second-class cruisers we had 49, as against 27 for France, Germany, and Russia; and 59 for all the other navies. In third-class cruisers we had 32; France, Germany, and Russia 32; and the rest of the world 55. So that in the case of the fleet in being we were maintaining a Three-Power Standard. It was the same story with regard to fleets on paper. In battleships and armed cruisers we were building 39 as against 35 by France, Germany, and Russia, and 68 by all the other navies of the world.' And Robertson remarks that the British navy built faster than any other (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxxxix, p. 1054). Cf. March 6, 1905, speeches by Herbert Roberts, Reginald Lucas, T. Lough (ibid., vol. cxlii, pp. 456 sqq., 459 sqq., 463 sqq.).

[2] H. of L., August 9, 1904 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxxxix, p. 1529).

[3] H. of L., March 21, 1905 (ibid., vol. cxliv, p. 610).

concentrating on the formation of a fleet of submarines and torpedo boats, but its haphazard methods and undisciplined crews had made the French navy the laughing-stock of the world. The Russian fleet left the Baltic and, after its command had given in the North Sea a pitiful display of brutality and bad nerves, had confronted the Japanese fleet which had already proved its worth in 1904 and had been annihilated at Tshushima. But other navies were coming to the fore, the Japanese in the first place, but also the American and the German. The British Admiralty had decided to make an ally of the Japanese fleet. With the American navy it was impossible to compete. The United States were wealthy enough to build as many warships as they pleased. London accordingly decided to proclaim the principle that war would never be waged against a nation of kindred race and language so that in applying the Two-Power Standard the American fleet need not be taken into account. But what two navies could the British take into account, if they were thinking all the time of only one: the German?

For the past five years the Emperor William assisted by Admiral Tirpitz had been engaged in the task of providing himself with a fleet so powerful that to use the official formula 'if the strongest naval power engaged it, it would endanger its own supremacy'. No one could mistake the allusion when a memorandum inspired by Fisher drew the attention of Parliament and the nation to a navy 'of the most efficient type and so fortunately circumstanced that it is able to concentrate almost the whole of its fleet at its home fronts'.[1]

The days had therefore returned when before the adoption of the Two-Power Standard Britain had only one foreign navy to consider. But that navy was no longer the French and there was this further difference from the earlier period that the German navy was not, as the French had been in the middle of the nineteenth century, the sole foreign navy which counted. There were others whose friendship it was prudent to gain by a system of *ententes* and alliances. For the time there was no longer any question of the Two-Power Standard and when after a short interval it would make its reappearance it would possess, as we shall see later, a totally different significance.

[1] *Navy: Distribution and Mobilisation of the Fleet*, December 6, 1904, p. 2.

5

In the meanwhile the Admiralty under the inspiration of Sir John Fisher effected a significant redistribution of the squadrons.[1] In the East only one squadron of cruisers would in future be stationed, entirely concentrated, after the abolition of the station at Esquimault on the Canadian coast and the Pacific station, in the three stations of China, Australia, and the East Indies and placed under the command of the Commander-in-Chief of the Chinese station. After this nothing until the Cape, where a squadron was stationed consisting of second- and third-class cruisers to guard communications between the east and west—that is to say, in these distant seas England yielded supremacy to the rival navies of the United States and Japan and accepted the second place, because she was obliged to concentrate her attention on European waters. In the Atlantic the same homeward movement was effected. The north Atlantic squadron was abolished and the squadron in the south Atlantic, charged with the protection and policing of the West Indies, was profoundly modified. The number of ships was considerably reduced and the squadron would henceforward be confined to five vessels called the 'Particular Service' Squadron to which—this was another of Fisher's innovations—cadets and boys would be sent to be trained by actual service at sea. These ships would make three cruises yearly, one of them to the West Indies, but would always return to their base which was not on the American but on the British coast, at Devonport.

Where then would the battleships be concentrated? The Mediterranean squadron was reduced to eight ironclads and an adequate complement of cruisers. The day had gone by when a war with France and Russia was expected and the Mediterranean seemed likely to be the principal theatre of naval warfare. The Channel fleet, on the other hand, was transferred to Gibraltar under the new name of the Atlantic fleet. Like the Mediterranean fleet it was composed of eight battleships with an adequate num-

[1] For this aspect of Fisher's policy see the memorandum signed by Lord Selborne entitled: *Navy: Distribution and Mobilisation of the Fleet*, December 6, 1904, which is completed by the *Circular Letter to Commanders-in-Chief at Home and Abroad*, signed Evan MacGregor and dated December 10, 1904, and Lord Selborne's memorandum entitled: *Redistribution of the Fleet: Arrangements consequent on the Redistribution of the Fleet*, March 15, 1905.

ber of cruisers. It took over a small part of the area formerly assigned to the Mediterranean fleet, but must be prepared to sail to whatever point in western waters the exigencies of war might require its despatch. What did this point seem likely to be? The extensive preparation made by the Admiralty in the waters surrounding the British coast enables us to guess. The Home Fleet under the new title of Channel fleet comprised, in accordance with the programme laid down by Fisher in December 1904, the large number of twelve battleships, not to mention the cruisers. A year later it consisted of seventeen battleships besides six armoured cruisers of the most recent type. The scrapping of so many antiquated vessels placed enough men at the disposal of the Admiralty to maintain all three squadrons at full strength. Each was to be permanently concentrated under the command of its admiral, though to prevent the captains losing all personal initiative a few units would be detached from time to time for isolated manœuvres. Measures were also taken to ensure the homogeneous composition of the crews. Hitherto ships stationed in home waters had been 'in commission' for an indefinite period, a quarter of the crews being renewed annually, those stationed in distant waters 'in commission' for three years, a period so long that it had been necessary to detach from time to time a number of sailors and send them ashore to undergo a course of special training and send on others to take their place. In future all ships, whatever their station, would be 'in commission' only for two years during which, except for some very exceptional reason, no officer or sailor would be allowed to leave the ship to which he had been assigned.[1]

Other measures of equal importance were adopted to provide for the defence of the British coast by employing the reserve. According to the system hitherto in force, it consisted of vessels older than the others and slightly out of date, which lay up empty in the home ports. If it became necessary to mobilize them, what a time it would take to fit them out, provide them with crews and train men, unaccustomed to active service, to take part in naval

[1] Very strict measures were adopted at the same time to prevent the squadrons being depleted of too large a number of vessels on the ground of repairs. No ship might be laid up for repairs for more than thirty days a year and repairs must always be carried out in such a way that in case of necessity the ship could be ready for sea in four days. No more than two ships might be detached for repair from the Channel Fleet, not more than one from the Atlantic and Mediterranean fleets (*Circular Letter to Commanders-in-Chief*, December 10, 1904).

warfare! All this Fisher changed within a few weeks, one is tempted to say within a few days.[1] Thanks to the policy of reducing the number of units hitherto dispersed by the Admiralty in distant oceans, he had at his disposal a fleet of twelve ironclads, fourteen armoured cruisers, and eight large protected cruisers which he could station in home waters 'in commission'. And thanks to the purge he had effected he disposed of sufficient sailors to man these vessels with what he termed nucleus crews, about two-fifths of the full complement, composed of men whom we might term 'skilled labourers' in those large factories which modern men-of-war have become. At regular intervals reservists joined them for training, who would then be competent in case of war to play the part of unskilled labourers and enable the reserve squadron to reinforce the Channel fleet in a few hours. Behind these vessels, there were other ships exempted from the condemnation passed upon all the worthless material of the British navy. If not sufficiently good to be kept armed, they were not bad enough to be sold as scrap iron. But it was the creation of a large reserve fleet permanently 'in commission' which together with the redistribution of squadrons constituted the original features of the new naval policy. It made possible 'the complete and instantaneous' mobilization of a formidable fleet in home waters. And the need for 'efficiency' was reconciled with the need for economy. But once again were not the two things at bottom synonymous? True economy is to obtain the maximum of results with a minimum of expenditure. A policy of concentration of forces was thus carried out, aimed at a new enemy. It was the German navy.

These innovations made by the British Admiralty aroused in Germany feelings not of alarm or annoyance but rather of gratified pride. Not only were the Germans proud of the fact that it was their example which had induced the British Admiralty to throw off its lethargy and modernize its methods, so that even in a sphere where Britain had so long been regarded as supreme, the

[1] 'The test which is to be made to-day of the readiness for immediate service of a portion of the recently reconstituted naval reserve in the home ports makes the beginning of what may almost be regarded as a new epoch in the history of the British Fleet. . . . It is possible that the British public may not realize at once all that this new departure means in terms of naval efficiency: but that it will be patent to every foreign professional critic is beyond doubt. It is, indeed, a remarkable fact that within a few weeks of what many people regard as a revolution in the system of our organization for war, we are able to witness a perfectly equipped squadron of ships in reserve proceeding to sea for a week's cruise, organized and prepared for instant battle, and this without withdrawing an officer or man from duties or studies he may be engaged in elsewhere' (*The Times*, February 9, 1905).

German Empire had become the model nation, but the redistribution of squadrons could be legitimately regarded at Berlin as the first victory won by the partisans of a strong navy.[1] Only four years after the passing of the law of 1900 Germany had compelled England to reduce her fleet in the Pacific and withdraw it from North American waters. Her high-seas fleet stationed between Heligoland and Kiel, still in its infancy but thoroughly up to date, which could count a dozen ironclads and for the next fifteen years would be increased in the regular proportion provided by law, had reason to be proud of the strange influence, the attraction, which we might almost call a suction, that it exercised upon the British navy. In England Fisher had skilfully contrived to win the support of the Liberals, who on the verge of taking office were delighted that a great sailor, an expert in the art of war, should declare it possible to reduce the navy estimates without weakening the navy. But he abolished too high-handedly too many posts not to make many enemies among those in high command. With the officers of the fleet and the Unionist politicians he was as unpopular as he was popular with the Liberals and for the same reason. This no doubt annoyed him and it was probably the desire to put an end to his unpopularity which led him to proclaim sooner than he had wished and with an imprudent flourish of trumpets the creation of the Dreadnought.

6

Immediately on his arrival at the Admiralty Fisher had appointed a Committee on Designs composed of naval officers and engineers to assist the director of naval construction to prepare plans for men-of-war in accordance with the instructions of the Board, in other words of the First Sea Lord. At the same time he

[1] 'It was certainly our example which compelled the English also to set to work and master once more the methods of naval warfare. Germany's position in the world set a standard which was methodically pursued by a navy which was still practically without vessels. We had no alternative but to build ships or make foreigners a present of our ideas. We built and when the world war broke out were still superior to the English in the quality and handling of our vessels though not in their number, although the days when their tactics were a traditional routine and their manœuvres chaotic had long passed' (Von Tirpitz, *Erinnerungen*, p. 47). It will be seen that Tirpitz regarded the German navy as superior in quality to the British even before the laws of 1898 and 1900 had been passed. In 1892 the German navy had, according to him, invented a new system of naval tactics which all the other navies beginning with the British subsequently copied (ibid., p. 46).

gave orders to speed up work in all the dockyards so as to turn out ships more quickly and meet the competition of the German fleet. A year had not passed before the results of his initiative became visible. In September the papers proclaimed to the world that a man-of-war was being built in the utmost secrecy, whose launching would mark an epoch in the history of the British fleet. On October 2, 1905, the first plate of her keel was laid and she was launched on February 10, 1906. It had been expected that she would not be ready for service until sixteen months after the construction began. In December 1906, the Dreadnought left the docks and received the official visit of the First Lord of the Admiralty and the First Sea Lord. The most advanced methods of organizing labour had been employed to expedite the construction of the ironclad with the avowed object of laying down rules to speed up normal construction.[1] But this extraordinary speed was to a large extent deceptive. The necessary material had been got together in advance, and material and guns intended for other vessels had been diverted to the Dreadnought, their construction being correspondingly delayed.[2]

What then was this masterpiece of the British Admiralty? The Dreadnought was a monster vessel, larger than any ironclad previously built—17,900 tons as against 16,000—more powerfully armed and swifter. Instead of four twelve-inch guns and ten six-inch, she possessed ten twelve-inch guns so arranged that six could be pointed together in all positions, eight in almost all. Her speed was twenty-one knots instead of the eighteen and a half of ironclads of the Lord Nelson type, almost equalling the twenty-two and a half knots of the armoured cruisers of the Devonshire type. The employment for the first time of the turbine had made this last improvement possible. At the same time in a more genuine secrecy the three armoured cruisers laid down as provided in the estimates for 1905 constituted an innovation as sensational as the Dreadnought. The Invincibles had a displacement of 17,250 tons, whereas the displacement of the Devonshires had not exceeded 10,850. They had an armament of eight twelve-inch guns; the Devonshires carried no guns of more than 7.5 inches. Their armour plating at its thickest measured seven inches instead of six. Their speed was twenty-five knots. They were genuine men-of-

[1] *The Times*, October 13, 1905.
[2] Fred T. Jane, *The British Battle Fleet*, vol. ii, p. 126 *n.*

war scarcely less powerfully armed than the Dreadnoughts and markedly swifter.

The immediate advantages which accrued to England from the invention of the Dreadnought[1] were incontestable.

In the first place the innovation took all the rival navies by surprise. While England blazoned so dramatically in the face of the world her increased speed of naval construction and the greater strength of her vessels, the other Powers found themselves compelled, if they wanted to launch men-of-war, not below the standard of the Dreadnoughts, to alter their programmes of naval construction, possibly even to stop the building of certain ships and recommence it on new lines. England gained time.

And time was also gained in another way. The German coastline was cut in two by the Danish peninsula. No communication could be established in wartime between the Baltic coast and the coast of the North Sea except by forcing a passage through the straights which divide the Danish islands from Sweden, and the British fleet would have to be faced before junction with the North Sea fleet could be established. It was to establish direct naval communications between the two portions of the German coast that the Kiel Canal had been cut. But the Dreadnoughts drew too much water and were too huge to pass through the Canal. If in her turn Germany were to build Dreadnoughts, either her fleet of Dreadnoughts must be divided into two or concentrated entirely on one side of the Kiel Canal, leaving the other coast devoid of Dreadnoughts which in no circumstances could take refuge from one sea in the other. The invention of the English Dreadnought confronted Germany with the urgent task of making the Kiel Canal wider and deeper so that it would be navigable by Dreadnoughts.[2] It was a task which would require many years to complete.

[1] For the Dreadnought its merits and dangers see, in addition to the general works already mentioned, two articles signed 'Captain R.N.' and entitled respectively '1881–1906: The Inflexible and the Dreadnought' and 'Food for Thought' which appeared at an interval of two months in the *United Service Magazine* for November 1906 (vol. xxxiv, New Series, pp. 121 sqq.), and January 1907 (vol. xxxiv, New Series, pp. 350 sqq.) and Archibald Hurd's reply to this writer's criticisms in an article entitled 'Uneasiness. Is it justified?' which appeared in the same number, January 1907, of the *United Service Magazine*. See further Arthur Lee, 'A Plea for maintaining our Battleship Programme' (*National Review*, August 1906, vol. xlvii, pp. 914 sqq.); and against the Dreadnought W. H. White, 'The Navy Estimates and Naval Debate' (*Nineteenth Century*, April 1908, vol. lxiii, pp. 517 sqq.).

[2] The question of the Kiel Canal and the difficulties it presented to the increase in the size of warships had already caused anxiety to the German Admiralty before the Dread-

But Fisher's dramatic surprise had its drawbacks.

In the first place, England lost a moral advantage. In modern times her naval policy had hitherto presented a defensive aspect. To possess a navy stronger than the French, as strong, even a little stronger, than the French and Russian navies combined, never to take the initiative in inventing engines of war but to leave that responsibility to some other nation, France for example, whose engineers had created the torpedo boat, the armed cruiser, and submarine, to wait until the experiment had been made abroad and then build torpedo-destroyers and torpedo boats, submarines, and armoured cruisers in reply to those already invented by the enemy nation—such hitherto had been the British method. Now all this was changed. The Admiralty seemed to be proclaiming to the world that in the armament competition it would henceforward take the initiative and challenge rival navies to overtake the British. At bottom to be sure it regarded itself as on the defensive against the threat of German attack. But it gave this defensive the air of an offensive, and moreover an offensive theatrically staged.

And did this invention of the Dreadnought, so loudly advertised by Fisher and his friends, really give the British navy such a lead over the others that it could not be caught up in four or five years? This ostentatious advertisement was calculated to alarm the other nations unnecessarily and hasten their reply. The Dreadnought had not left the dock before Germany laid down a ship whose dimensions were to rival those of this yet mysterious monster. And when later on Germany would build Dreadnoughts

nought made its appearance. See Von Müller's letter to Tirpitz of February 5, 1905: 'It is obvious that our main strength must lie in vessels of the line and in torpedo boats. It is equally clear that in so far as natural difficulties do not prevent it the gigantic battleship must be the type of our future men-of-war, indeed, that we shall do well to anticipate in this direction the latest types of vessels contructed by our opponent. But we have to face a natural obstacle, the size of the canal between the Baltic and North Sea. It might indeed be argued that to concentrate our naval power on vessels of 17,000 or 18,000 tons is so important that it would be better to give up the use of the canal than the giant man-of-war. I, however, do not set so high a value on the latter. To my mind the strategical concentration of our fleet by the canal is more important than its tactical concentration in these monster men-of-war and I would therefore not adopt the latter until domestic conditions permit the canal to be reconstructed' (Tirpitz, *Politische Dokumente*, vol. i, p. 15). It was, we must add, not only the Kiel Canal but the waters around the North Sea ports which the German naval authorities would be obliged to deepen by extensive dredging operations to enable monster battleships to move freely. Another unexpected advantage for the British Dreadnoughts. 'The German Admiralty is going, is indeed obliged, to spend 12½ million sterling in dredging so as to allow these existing ships of ours to go and fight them in their own waters, when before they could not do so. It was, indeed, a Machiavellian enterprise of Providence on our own behalf that brought about the evolution of the Dreadnought' (Letter from Admiral Fisher to King Edward, 1907, *Memories*, p. 15).

every year, she in turn would enjoy an unexpected advantage over England. The British fleet was an old fleet containing many antiquated vessels. If the Dreadnought really possessed all the value Fisher claimed for it, these old ships would be rendered worthless as soon as the German Admiralty began building Dreadnoughts and confronted England with a navy consisting entirely of modern vessels. The fact that her navy was only a few years old, hitherto a disadvantage for Germany, would, Fisher's critics maintained, prove an advantage, if the superiority of the Dreadnought over previous types of vessels were really so great. For in that case the invention amounted to scrapping at a stroke the entire British fleet built before 1905.

But it was not so certain after all that the Dreadnought was the marvellous innovation it was declared to be. All navies about 1905 were tending to adopt this type of monster vessel. The idea would seem to have been borrowed by the British Admiralty from the Italian navy which perhaps would have been the first to launch a Dreadnought if the nation had been sufficiently wealthy.[1] Already Japan and Germany were considering and the United States had actually begun the construction of new types of ironclad strikingly similar to the Dreadnought. And it might well be asked whether when the construction of larger and still larger vessels better armed, better armoured, and swifter was the fashion in naval quarters, the invention of the torpedo and the development of heavy artillery were not changing the entire conditions of naval warfare? Of what use would be a sea monster, which cost £1,800,000 to build, if a single torpedo or shell could sink it in a few minutes? A war without precedent in history was expected to prove these criticisms sound. But for the moment the Russo-Japanese War, the first real naval war the world had witnessed since the days of Trafalgar and Aboukir, seemed to justify the champions of monster vessels. The torpedo had played a very minor part and the war had been decided by a battle between ironclads, a Trafalgar of the Far East.[2] And even if there had been

[1] F. T. Jane, *The British Battle Fleet*, vol. ii, pp. 134 sqq.

[2] 'Lessons of the Japanese War' (*The Times*, January 6, 1905). Admiral the Hon. E. R. Fremantle 'The Japanese Trafalgar' (*United Service Magazine*, July 1905; vol. xxi, New Series, pp. 349 sqq.). Cyprian A. G. Bridge, 'The Russo-Japanese Naval Campaign of 1904' (*Naval Annual*, 1905, pp. 97 sqq.). Captain A. T. Mahan, *Naval Administration and Warfare, Some General Principles with other Essays*, 1908, p. 165. The French Minister of Marine, Camille Pelletan, had adopted the ideas of the new school which regarded the epoch of large ironclads as ended by the advent of torpedo boats and submarines; and the

no Russo-Japanese War to justify the Dreadnought, the same impulse, the same instinct of megalomania, would undoubtedly have produced the same effect. Fisher, who prided himself on his modernity and was determined to introduce into the British navy the methods of large-scale industry, was perhaps in his patronage of the Dreadnought the victim of industrialism. Of its very nature the machine signifies first and foremost an economy of energy in the pursuit of a given object. But it also signifies production on a large scale, fabrication of the colossal, and in this aspect often produces a waste of energy in the pursuit of an aim sentimental rather than rational. The invention of the Dreadnought may be regarded as a challenge launched by particular shipbuilders against their rivals. The builders of German liners said to the builders of British: 'You are building transatlantic giants, your Olympics, we shall build Imperators.' And the builders of British men-of-war spoke the same language. 'You are building large ironclads, we shall construct giant ironclads. Dreadnoughts, and if you in turn build Dreadnoughts, we shall reply by building super-Dreadnoughts.'[1] On balance when war broke out the advantage of one nation over another as regards the dimensions of its ships would be the very trifling advantage of a few months. But we shall understand the nature of the conflict better if we regard it as a war already being waged in peacetime. It was not simply that preparations were being made for a future battle of Dreadnoughts. The battle had been joined. The question was, which of the two nations would admit ruin first?

7

At the end of 1906 a mutiny of serious proportions in which civilians participated broke out in the Royal Naval Barracks at Portsmouth. It was of course quickly suppressed, but though a

deterioration of the French navy under his administration seemed to confirm the lessons of the 'Japanese Trafalgar' (*Naval Annual*, 1909, pp. 15 sqq.).

[1] For a comparison between the giants of the mercantile marine and the giants of the navy see Frank Fox, *Ramparts of the Empire: A View of the Navy from an Imperial Standpoint*, 1910, p. 14: 'The *Lusitania* is 785 feet long, the Dreadnought 490 feet. But whilst in breadth the *Lusitania* has 88 feet, not much more than a tenth of her length, the Dreadnought has 82 feet, over a sixth of her length. The indicated H.P. of the Atlantic liner is 68,000, giving a speed of 26 knots; of the Dreadnought 27,500, giving a speed of nearly 22 knots.'

number of the mutineers were sentenced, some of the sentences were reduced and Campbell-Bannerman speaking in the House of Commons let it be understood that all might be reduced before their expiration. On the other hand, several of the officers against whom the mutiny had been made were deprived of their command, one was reprimanded, and the officer who, in consequence of these changes, took command of the barracks, offended supporters of the old traditions by the tone of democratic good fellowship with which he spoke to his men on his first introduction to them. At the same time rumours began to circulate, which would shortly assume serious proportions, of a dissension in the high command. Everywhere two hostile parties were in existence, Fisher's supporters and his enemies. The Commander-in-Chief of the Channel fleet who in case of war would presumably become Commander-in-Chief of the entire navy was said to be at daggers drawn, on the one hand with the officer in command of the squadron of cruisers attached to his fleet, on the other with the First Sea Lord, a condition of affairs which gave rise to unfortunate incidents at the manœuvres of 1908. In 1904 the report of the Esher Committee had contrasted, with the spirit of faction which poisoned army headquarters, the harmonious co-operation traditional in the high command of the navy. Had the three years of Fisher's dictatorship put an end to it? These rumours and episodes must have been solid comfort for German statesmen.

The German Government however was not having an easy task. Algeciras had not been a success for its diplomats. Then Holstein who had been recalled had avenged himself by spreading in the press infamous accusations against the Emperor's most intimate friends. Meanwhile, alleged scandals in the Colonial Administration were the object of violent debates in the Reichstag, and a rising of some negro tribes in South-West Africa was suppressed only with considerable difficulty. But the Reichstag's refusal in December 1906 to vote the credits demanded by the Chancellor for its suppression provided William II and his Prime Minister with the opportunity to re-establish their authority. It was dissolved in conformity with the tradition of Bismarck and at the following election in February 1907 the Opposition suffered a severe defeat: the Social Democrats lost about half their seats. It was a contrast with the British and French elections of the previous year. In France three years' government by a Bohemian had

lowered the French fleet several degrees in the naval hierarchy of Europe. What was happening in every rank of the British navy gave some ground for fearing that England had caught the infection from France. In Germany alone the Government was able to maintain its authority against the attacks of democratic anarchy. This encouraged the German Government to approach in a spirit of insolent cynicism the sessions of the Hague Conference which met at the beginning of the summer after three years of laborious negotiation between the Great Powers. The programme of the Conference as drawn up by the Russian Government in April 1906 was confined to the development of the Hague Court of Arbitration, the reform of international law governing warfare on land and sea and the extension of the Geneva convention to the latter. But the British Government insisted that the limitation of armaments should be discussed and to announce its intention to the world made use of a novel method.

The *Speaker*, a small weekly review which ever since the Boer War had conducted a violent campaign against imperialism and militarism, appeared in a new form in the early part of 1907, not to change its policy but better equipped with funds to pursue it with even greater vigour under a new editor, the eminent journalist, H. W. Massingham. The first number of the remodelled review, now called *The Nation*, opened with an important article on 'the Hague Conference' written by Campbell-Bannerman, evidently with the approval of his Cabinet. It began by recalling that the object for which the Conference had been originally summoned in 1898 was precisely to discuss the problem of limiting armaments; if since that date the burden of armaments had considerably increased, pacific ideals had made equal progress. Surely the time had come to satisfy their devotees by some practical limitation of armaments. England, Sir Henry pointed out—and here we see what a valuable support for his plea were the reforms carried out by Haldane at the War Office and by Fisher at the Admiralty—had already set the example by reducing her military and naval expenditure. She would go further in that direction if the other powers would follow her lead. Moreover, such a policy would not endanger her supremacy at sea. For 'the sea power of this country implies no challenge to any single State or group of States. I am persuaded that throughout the world that power is recognized as non-aggressive and innocent

of designs against the independence, the commercial freedom, and the legitimate development of other States. . . . Our fleets . . . carry with them no menace across the waters of the world but a message of the most cordial goodwill, based on a belief in the community of interests between the nations.'

This quaint manifesto which began with a pacifist[1] act of faith to conclude by subscription to the creed of Mahan created a bad impression in every Continental country. When it confused in this way the freedom of mankind with the naval supremacy of England, was the British Government deceiving itself or with an even greater simplicity trying to deceive other nations? The French fleet was deteriorating, the Russian had been almost wiped out and the German fleet, which promised to be more dangerous, had not had time to become sufficiently large to threaten the safety of the British coast. A general limitation of armaments on the basis of the *status quo* would be the cheapest way for Britain to perpetuate her naval supremacy.

We must, however, bear in mind the difficult position in which the Liberal Cabinet was placed at the opening of the second Hague Conference. Disarmament was part of its programme. On the eve of the General Election the Prime Minister had formally pledged himself to it.[2] After the Election, when the programme submitted to the powers by the Russian Government had just been made public, a Liberal member of the House of Commons had moved a resolution demanding a drastic reduction of armaments and the insertion of the question in the agenda of the Conference. Replying for the Government Sir Edward Grey was compelled to accept the motion.[3] But a Unionist member proposed an amendment declaring that the naval supremacy of Great

[1] It was in 1907 during the discussions which preceded and accompanied the second Hague Conference that the word 'pacifist' first became current. See *Speaker*, March 30, 1907, *Economist*, July 6, 1907. It makes its first appearance in the *Grosse Politik* . . . on February 18, its second on March 12 under the pen of Von Schön. Hatzfeld uses it on May 8, Marschall on October 21. The French origin of the word (see my *History*, vol. v, p. 66 *n.* is shown by the following quotation from the *National Review* (October 1907, vol. I, p. 154): 'From that moment commenced the education of French governments and the awakening of the French nation to the sterner aspects of national existence, and the abandonment of those amiable illusions which, under the influence of *pacifistes*, and other perilous charlatans, the Republic had begun to cherish.' But its use did not become fixed as quickly as one might imagine: as late as July 31, 1914, Sir Francis Bertie writes to his government: 'M. Jaurès has been killed in a restaurant by a young man on the ground that he was a pacifist and a traitor' (*British Documents* . . . vol. xi, p. 233).

[2] Speech at the Albert Hall, December 21, 1905.

[3] H. of C., May 9, 1906, Vivian's motion (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clvi, pp. 1383 sqq.).

Britain must be maintained and Grey, while asking the mover to withdraw it so as not to hamper the Government's action, said that he felt as much as any man the force of his argument. The Admiralty felt it even more strongly. The following winter Fisher asked for the construction in 1907 of three new Dreadnoughts. If it gave him the ships, the Liberal Government, only a year after taking office, would return to the old path of large naval estimates and competition in armaments; if it refused, he threatened to retire and with him three other members of the Board of Admiralty. How could the Cabinet escape the impasse? By developing a plea which appears to have originated with the Unionist leader of the Opposition, Balfour,[1] and maintaining that the British navy, unlike the armies and navies of other powers, was exclusively a weapon of defence. The powers had therefore no reason to object to the supremacy of the British fleet, since it policed the seas without detriment to the liberty of any nation. The contention was ludicrous. Obviously a maritime blockade violated the independence of the nation blockaded as gravely as an invasion.[2] And at that very moment the Admiralty was contemplating the day when by transporting an expeditionary force to the coast of France, Belgium, or even Germany, it would take a direct part in an offensive. But the argument was seductive. It became a commonplace of the Press and Parliament.

The manifesto therefore which the Government published in the *Nation* was not a masterpiece of Machiavellian cunning but an attempt to compromise between two conflicting forces which confronted each other in England or perhaps, to speak more

[1] H. of C., May 9, 1906: '. . . We ought . . . to have . . . a Fleet which would make us absolutely secure against any possible combination against our shores. Is there anything aggressive in that policy? . . . Our Fleet is for defensive purposes and their fleet, (the navy of certain foreign powers) is not for defensive purposes alone—[Why not?]—Because their shores are unassailable, partly for geographical reasons and partly for the reason that they have great land armies which would make invasion by any Maritime Power absolutely ludicrous and futile' (ibid., vol. clvi, p. 410). Even an organ of such strong pacifist convictions as the *Nation* was compelled to write, if it would keep its readers' sympathies: 'Nothing could be more damaging to our influence as a Liberal Power or *more threatening to our naval supremacy* than to associate that supremacy with abuses like the destruction of innocent merchant ships and the bombardment of defenceless towns' (July 6, 1907).

[2] See the instructions given by Grey himself to Sir Edward Fry, the head of the British delegation at The Hague: '. . . The proportion between the British Army and the Great Continental Armies has come to be such that the British Army, if operating alone, could not be regarded as a means of offence against the mainland of a Great Continental Power. For her ability to bring pressure to bear upon her enemies in war Great Britain has therefore to rely on the navy alone. The Government cannot agree to any resolution which would diminish the effective means which the navy has of bringing pressure to bear upon an enemy.'

accurately, in the minds of many Englishmen. To satisfy one of these the Government said: 'We will ask at the Hague for measures of disarmament.' To satisfy the other it added immediately: 'But they must not endanger the nation's safety or sea power.' The Sea Lords were told: 'Give up your demand for three Dreadnoughts, be content with only two.' But the Government added: 'The concession we are asking you to make is after all, conditional. If the Conference does not produce practical measures of general disarmament you shall have your third Dreadnought.' And the Sea Lords could accept the compromise the more readily because they were certain the Conference would fail. But what Englishman expected it to succeed? What Englishman witnessed its opening or followed its proceedings without marked dissatisfaction? The advanced Liberals, partisans of a reconciliation between England and Germany, were quick to perceive that the English proposals were diametrically opposed to their desires and calculated to lead directly to a conflict between the two nations. And the Foreign Office reached the same unfavourable conclusion though for different reasons. For many years it had worked hard to establish good relations between England and all the foreign nations in order to defeat the opposite policy pursued by the German Emperor, who had hoped to lead Europe against England. By raising the question of disarmament, indeed by simply going to the Hague, England ran the risk of once more reuniting Europe against her and enabling German policy to score a success.

8

At the Hague the same ritual was observed as in 1898. The international propagandists of the pacifist creed flocked to the Conference. W. T. Stead—a friend, moreover, of Admiral Fisher—was at their head. He passed to and fro between London and the Hague, visiting London to rouse the English Government from its lethargy, and returning to the Hague to edit the *Courrier de la Conférence*, the unofficial organ of the Conference throughout its sessions. We can judge of the spirit which animated the various delegations from our knowledge of the attitude of the rulers and statesmen who sent them to the Hague. The three

Emperors were opposed even to the meeting of the Conference and their hostility increased when they saw on its programme the disarmament which they regarded as a craze of Jews, Socialists, and hysterical women.[1] The King of England had confided to William II that he regarded the Conference as 'a humbug'.[2] President Roosevelt was sceptical[3] and brought forward a scheme for disarmament—it limited neither the expenditure on navies nor the number of vessels, but merely their size[4]—which seemed devised as a counterblast to the plans of the British Admiralty. And the French Government had waited, before publicly declaring itself opposed to the discussion of disarmament, only until Prince von Bülow in measured but vigorous language had defended the German Government's opposition to the proposal. Baron Marschall, the head of the German delegation, felt himself therefore on this crucial point in agreement with every foreign office in the world, not even perhaps excepting the British. For in his interviews with Metternich, Grey seems to have had no other purpose than to minimize, as far as he could, the bad impression produced in Germany and throughout the entire Continent by a proposal for which he was responsible only as a member of the Cabinet.[5] The German delegates intended to withdraw if the

[1] Isvolsky's words reported by Von Schön in a telegram of March 18, 1907 (*Die Grosse Politik*, vol. xxiii[1], p. 163).

[2] Letter from the Emperor William to President Roosevelt, communicated by Von Bülow to the German Ambassador at Washington, January 5, 1907 (ibid., vol. xxiii[1], p. 93).

[3] Roosevelt to Henry White, August 14, 1906 (Allan Nevins, *Henry White: Thirty Years of American Diplomacy*, 1930, p. 498). See further Roosevelt's words reported to Edward VII by Count Gleichen, August 31, 1906: '. . . Tell Lord Grey and Haldane [he meant of course Sir Edward Grey] not to let themselves be carried away by sentimental ideas at the Hague Conference. Wars are not to be conducted on sentimental principles, and I'm afraid from what I see and hear, they may let themselves be swayed by their party in that direction against their own conviction . . . but don't let them do it' (Sir Sidney Lee, *King Edward VII* . . . vol. ii, p. 437).

[4] Von Tschirschky to Von Tirpitz, September 7, 1906 (*Die Grosse Politik*, vol. xxiii, pp. 88–9). Baron Speck von Sternburg to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, January 4, 1907 (ibid., vol. xxiii[1], pp. 91–2) the same to the same, January 6, 1907 (ibid., pp. 94–5).

[5] Von Stumm to Prince von Bülow, March 8, 1907: '. . . "Count Bosdari" (who had submitted to Grey a proposal by Tittoni) received the impression . . . that he did not intend to examine it and he does not believe that the British Government is in earnest with its policy of disarmament. On the contrary, in his opinion the Government only desires to make a good impression on Parliament and the nation and has no intention of bringing forward any concrete proposals. . . . Sir Charles Hardinge told me a little while ago in the course of a conversation in which we touched upon the question of disarmament that he had repeatedly impressed upon the Liberal idealists who attach such weight to it that under present circumstances the discussion of the question would achieve no practical results. He expressed the opinion that the subject was arousing too much excitement, that divergent standpoints should be given a calm hearing and if no agreement were reached, the failure should not be taken too much to heart' (*Die Grosse Politik*, vol. xxiii[1], pp. 206–7).

question of disarmament was discussed. But the Conference was content to adopt unanimously and without debate a colourless resolution affirming the desirability of disarmament which simply reiterated in slightly stronger terms the resolution adopted in 1908.

The matter was disposed of at a single sitting. The real work of the Conference, which lasted from June 15 to October 18, dealt with a number of questions of a more legal character. In the first place there was the development of international arbitration, possibly the institution of compulsory arbitration. For the past year the English Conservatives had urged that this should be the leading issue at the Conference. The Government, after some hesitation it would seem, adopted their point of view. It was in harmony with the views of the French delegation which already at the first Conference had pursued the same policy. But here the opposition of Germany stood in the way and nothing came of the attempt except a lengthy declaration of principle which the Germans had no difficulty in accepting for, as the head of their delegation said, it would be 'difficult to say less in more words'.

The important question remained of belligerents' rights at sea. Neutrals continued to demand, as they had always demanded, the abolition of the right of capture, freedom of the seas; and the United States of America, which had no conception that the day would come when its navy would take part in a European war, espoused their cause. The American delegation proposed to place very severe restrictions upon the right to capture neutral vessels in time of war, and the German Government, brushing aside Tirpitz's opposition, cleverly declared in favour of the proposal. It was indeed rejected. But it made it easier for Germany to join with America and France in opposing an English resolution of a plainly pacifist character demanding the complete abolition of contraband of war. Though the proposal was accompanied by reserva-

The same to the same, April 20, 1907, report of a conversation with Grey: '. . . I was (I told him) fully convinced that the English idealists who champion disarmament were inspired by the best and most honourable intentions. They were not however practical politicians and I asked him to tell me whether it was his personal belief that on this question the Conference would achieve any positive result. It testifies to his honour and frankness that he shrank from an affirmative answer and refused to reply. . . .' And he concludes: 'I have no doubt that the Government itself does not believe that in this matter the Conference can achieve any practical result. That in spite of this it persists in its intention is to be explained by reasons of domestic policy. There is in my humble opinion no reason to believe that the British Government entertains any sinister designs, in particular against Germany' (*Die Grosse Politik*, vol. xxiii[1], pp. 215–16).

tions which rendered it suspect in certain quarters, England had all the small powers on her side that day. But when she raised the question of floating mines and championed what was obviously the humanitarian point of view, she again seemed to the weak nations, for whom the floating mine was their only weapon against British domination at sea, to be defending brazenly her own interests. Finally, a complicated resolution was adopted which in theory slightly restricted the use of floating mines. On the question of the right of capture it was Germany that took the initiative by proposing that an international court should be set up to decide all disputed questions of contraband in time of war. On the main issues, the final decisions were left to a committee of experts which met in London at the beginning of 1908 and whose work led to the declaration of London of February 26, 1909, which restricted severely the right of blockade and the application of the doctrine of 'continuous voyage' and limited contraband of war to a small category of merchandise of an obviously military character. Throughout the discussions, too incoherent and vague to hold the attention of the public, the British press without distinction of party protested against the combination of timidity and bungling displayed by the British delegation. Lord Reay, an eminent lawyer and a member of the delegation, bombarded the Prime Minister with his complaints. He protested against the instructions he received from the Admiralty which compelled him to speak against his conscience.[1] The vagueness and incoherence of the discussions turned to the advantage of Germany. At the Hague she was no longer an isolated country against which the entire world was conspiring. By proposing an international prize court the nation whose delegates cynically paraded their contempt for the illusions of pacifism contrived to take control of the proceedings. This success compensated the Emperor William for the blow to his prestige he had suffered by the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian agreement. Three weeks after the Conference closed he arrived at Windsor. His visit in October 1902 had been his last visit during the period of friendship. This was the first during the period of enmity.

[1] J. A. Spender, *The Life of the Right Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*, vol. ii, p. 333.

The visit had been preceded by complicated negotiations. King Edward's invitation had been given as early as June 14. It had at first been coldly received, following as it did the conclusion of the Mediterranean agreement. Fisher had made the situation worse by offering to put himself personally at the Emperor's service while he was the guest of the British nation. This offer of the English Admiral aroused suspicion at Berlin. What if the invitation had originated with Fisher, who wished to humiliate the Emperor by making him visit the King of England before the King visited him? To reassure the German Government on this point King Edward during his stay at Carlsbad paid a visit to his nephew, who was in the neighbourhood. Then the Emperor announced his intention to come escorted by a squadron, and when persuaded to abandon his intention refused to come at all. Then he wanted to bring his Chancellor with him. A violent attack on Bülow's policy which appeared in *The Times* of October 10 may have contributed to make him abandon the idea. He was accompanied only by his Minister for Foreign Affairs, Von Schön. The Liberal press gave him an enthusiastic welcome, the attitude of the Unionist press, in obedience to the wishes of the Court, was correct and even courteous. He was cheered in the London streets and at the Guildhall where he made a pacific speech. When his visit to Windsor was over he spent a few weeks on an unofficial visit to a friend, and did not leave for Germany until December 11 after spending a month in England.[1]

While the Emperor was his uncle's guest many British statesmen who had never met him were delighted at this opportunity to see and converse with a man whom the accident of birth had placed in so formidable a position, and he won their good opinion by his jovial and easy manner. The Bagdad railway was discussed and his attitude seemed conciliatory. But the question of the navy, the only burning question, was carefully avoided, and while the

[1] For the incidents connected with the preparations for this visit and the visit itself see from the English side, *British Documents*, vol. vi, pp. 78 sqq.; from the German, *Die Grosse Politik*, vol. xxiv, pp. 15 sqq. See also R. B. Haldane, *Before the War*, 1920, pp. 42 sqq.; *An Autobiography*, 1929, pp. 289 sqq.; John Viscount Morley, *Recollections*, vol. ii, pp. 237–8; and John Morley to Bryce (H. A. L. Fisher, *James Bryce, Viscount Bryce of Dechmont*, vol. ii, p. 92).

Emperor was actually in England the German Government laid before the Reichstag its naval estimates for the coming year. Apparently they did not exceed the provisions laid down by the law of 1900. But it was decided to reduce the life of vessels of the line from twenty-five to twenty years. This would hasten by one-fifth the rate of replacement and therefore the tempo of naval construction. Every year from 1908 to 1911 four large ironclads were to be laid down. And at the same time it was provided that all vessels of the line to be built in future would possess a larger tonnage than in the past, in other words would be Dreadnoughts —that is to say, the British Admiralty was already ceasing to profit by the confusion into which other navies had been thrown by the launching of the first of these giants. From now onwards both nations were doomed to fight and ruin each other in the battle of Dreadnoughts. After two years of Liberal government England had taken a step forward not towards peace but towards war.

Three months later an incident unimportant in itself but serious on account of the violent feeling it aroused revealed how intense was the hatred of Germany which prevailed in political circles.

On March 6, 1908, a short letter appeared in *The Times* headed 'Under Which King?' that is to say 'Under which monarch are we living? The King of England? or the King of Prussia?' The letter informed its readers that the German Emperor had sent a letter to Lord Tweedmouth, the First Lord of the Admiralty, which amounted to 'an endeavour to influence, in the interests of Germany, the Minister responsible for the navy estimates'. It appeared that the Emperor had in fact written a long letter to Lord Tweedmouth, couched in familiar and even bantering terms, intended to allay the alarm caused in England by the growth of the German fleet and that he had sent a courteous reply in which he communicated to the Emperor as a token of confidence and friendship the details of the forthcoming estimates, as yet unknown to Parliament. What was the source of the leakage? The War Office? The letter in *The Times* bore the signature of its military correspondent, Colonel Repington, whose relations with the War Office we already know. The Admiralty? It was a hotbed of intrigue. The Court, King Edward's entourage? The Emperor's letter contained sarcastic remarks about Lord Esher,

the King's intimate friend, which made its publication impossible, and we now know that William II received at the same time as Lord Tweedmouth's reply a very strongly worded letter from King Edward protesting against the breach of diplomatic usage committed by addressing the letter to one of his ministers and not to himself. In fact, from the explanations given in Parliament it transpired that immediately on the receipt of the imperial letter Lord Tweedmouth had communicated it to his colleagues and drawn up his reply with their approval. And finally it is possible that in giving the Emperor this information he was acting in accordance with Grey's wishes. For the British Government had suggested the previous summer that a mutual exchange between the powers of information as to their respective estimates might be a means of bridging over the naval conflict between the two nations and had empowered Sir Edward to make a proposal to that effect at the Hague, which however gained little support.[1] The press with few exceptions did nothing to inflame public feeling, the leaders of the Opposition in both Houses made no use of the incident against the Government, and Lord Rosebery even took the opportunity to congratulate himself publicly on having foreseen the dangerous consequences of the *entente cordiale*.[2] But Colonel Repington's blow had gone home. Lord Tweedmouth's position had been too severely shaken. It was obvious that he would be obliged to leave the Admiralty at the first opportunity.

10

It was not long delayed. When Colonel Repington's article appeared, for a month past the Prime Minister had ceased to take part in the debates in the House of Commons. Seventy-two years old, suffering from a severe disease of the heart, and deeply afflicted by the recent death of a wife whom he fondly loved, the old Parliamentarian could no longer cope with his crushing task. A nation naturally kindly and courteous sympathized with his sufferings without distinction of political views and they increased

[1] August 17, 1907. The *Manchester Guardian* (August 19) regretted the failure of a proposal whose adoption would have made possible private negotiations between the Powers, for example, between Germany and England.

[2] H. of L., March 9, 1908 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxxv, pp. 1075–7).

his popularity. But it had indeed increased steadily since that day at the end of 1905 when he had insisted on being Prime Minister, and not in name alone. The members of the Labour party liked him. They did not forget how on the question of the Trade Disputes Bill of 1906 he had had the courage to outstrip his party which otherwise would probably have been compelled to yield their demands with a bad grace, and make them his own, their victory his. The Irish did not forget that after the defeat of the Irish Council Bill he had made it clear that he bore them no grudge for their refusal to accept a compromise, and so far as he was concerned was desirous to grant them far more extensive concessions as soon as circumstances permitted. To the advanced Liberals, the pro-Boers of yesterday, he had given their revenge, which surely was at the same time his personal revenge, by granting representative government to the Transvaal and Orange River Colony. The moderate Liberals and the imperialists might well have taken offence at this thoroughgoing Liberalism. This was not the case. The moderates felt that he was at bottom one of themselves and on the question of the Education Bill his sceptical attitude had brought him close to the Archbishop of Canterbury, another man of moderation, and enabled them to work together in a sincere attempt to discover a compromise. And the imperialists were grateful for an indolence which enabled the Foreign Office, the War Office, and the Admiralty to pursue their policy under the cloak of a kindliness which reassured the Premier's pacifist friends. And lastly King Edward, who had never liked Balfour, who, he felt, despised him, had soon learnt to appreciate his successor's geniality. 'C-B'—it was the name by which the Premier was customarily spoken of in Parliament and the familiar designation proved at once the extent and character of his popularity—had come to be widely regarded as the only leader capable of holding together that bundle of conflicting tendencies which now constituted the Liberal party.

When the term had been originally created, 'Liberal' had meant 'hostile to the state in every form, to the Socialist state and the militarist state alike'. Now, however, a Liberal was obliged to pose as the champion, more or less advanced, of social democracy, and at the same time, if he wished to govern the country, could not escape the necessity of piling up armaments both by land and sea. Confronted with two tendencies, neither of which

was distinctively 'Liberal', the party which had obtained office under that label was faced with the problem of choosing between them or harmonizing both. It was a difficult but urgent task and the venerable 'C-B' did not preside over its fulfilment. On April 6, only a fortnight before his death, he resigned to make way for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Henry Asquith, whom public opinion designated as his successor.

PART II

FOUR YEARS OF CRISIS

CHAPTER I

Winston Churchill and Lloyd George

I CHURCHILL AT THE BOARD OF TRADE

1

HENRY ASQUITH succeeded Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as Prime Minister. It was a victory for the Liberal imperialists. Already at the end of 1905 they had attempted to secure the leadership of the Commons for Asquith and force Campbell-Bannerman to enter the Lords. Now an accident had achieved their object. Asquith held the coveted post and Campbell-Bannerman had been got rid of more completely than they had dared to hope. The Conservatives were delighted: Grey's anti-German policy was assured in future of the Prime Minister's support. On the other hand, Asquith's promotion does not seem to have aroused much protest from the Radical pacifists. By his tact and conciliatory temper he had won the confidence of the entire party. Even with Campbell-Bannerman after the original disagreement he was soon on excellent terms. And in any case what was the use of resisting the inevitable? Asquith had hardly entered Parliament when his talents pointed him out to everyone as a future minister; he had hardly become a minister, when everyone hailed in him a future premier. His early education and his temperament had invested him with the indispensable gravity. His second marriage, when his first wife had left him the father of several children, to a young and brilliant madcap had introduced him to fashionable society and made his talents human. He was a man of sound judgment who lacked the flame—heavenly or demonic—of genius.[1] Were not other qualities required if the Liberal party after its almost portentous victory at the polls in January 1906 was to retain the ardour which alone could win new victories? And was it not obvious at the beginning of 1908 that the Liberal Government would be exposed to serious dangers,

[1] Biographies of Asquith: J. P. Alderson, *Mr. Asquith*, 1906. Frank Elias, *The Right Hon. H. H. Asquith: A Biography and Appreciation*, 1909. And more particularly: J. A. Spender and Cyril Asquith, *Life of Herbert Henry Asquith, Lord Oxford and Asquith*, 1932. His own works: *The Genesis of the War*, 1923; *Fifty Years of Parliament*, 1926; *Memories and Reflections*, 1928, are of poor quality, hastily put together and (especially the two latter) very uninforming. Contemporary French portraits: Jacques Bardoux, *Silhouettes d'Outre-Manche*, 1909, pp. 82 sqq.; Augustin Filon, *L'Angleterre d'Edouard VII*, 1911, pp. 97 sqq.; Princess Bibesco, *Portraits d'Hommes*, 1929, pp. 91 sqq.

unless it could find by the side of Asquith and in his Cabinet an eager and enterprising spirit to play the part Canning had once played beside Lord Liverpool and more recently Chamberlain beside Lord Salisbury, one day perhaps to supplant him and become Prime Minister in his stead?

The changes which were effected in the Cabinet after Campbell-Bannerman's death will perhaps help us to guess the quarter in which he was to be sought. If at the Board of Education Walter Runciman replaced Reginald McKenna and McKenna in turn took the place at the Admiralty of Lord Tweedmouth, who could no longer remain there after the incident of his correspondence with William II, and Lord Crewe succeeded Lord Elgin at the Colonial Office, these changes did not interest the public. But Asquith, now First Lord of the Treasury and Prime Minister, was no longer Chancellor of the Exchequer and Lloyd George took his place. He therefore left the Board of Trade, where he was succeeded by Winston Churchill, hitherto Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. It was on these two men that the eyes of the public were fixed. Asquith, Premier at fifty-six, embodied the present; Lloyd George and Churchill, respectively forty-five and thirty-four, were the men of to-morrow.[1] They were united by close ties of friendship. Both were opposed to a policy of heavy expenditure on the army and navy, both advocates of a policy of social reform which, they maintained, the Liberal party

[1] Biographies of Lloyd George: John Hugh Edwards and Spencer Leigh Hughes, *From Village Green to Downing Street: The Life of the Right Hon. D. Lloyd George, M.P.*, 1908; John Hugh Edwards, *The Life of David Lloyd George, with a short History of the Welsh People*, 4 vols, 1913–1918 (with a supplementary volume by J. Saxon Mills, entitled: *David Lloyd George, War Minister*) (the writer was a Welsh M.P. who composed a panegyric, but a panegyric which is well documented); J. Hugh Edwards, *David Lloyd George—the Man and the Statesman*, 2 vols., 1925 (an abridgment of the previous work); Hubert Du Parcq, *Life of David Lloyd George*, 4 vols. (the fourth is a collection of speeches), 1912, well documented, since the author makes use of the diary and notes of Lloyd George's brother; Harold Spender, *The Prime Minister*, 1920 (the work of a political and personal friend); W. F. Rook, *Mr. Lloyd George and the War*, 1920; also E. T. Raymond, *Mr. Lloyd George: A Biography*, 1922 (more critical than the preceding works and of considerable interest. For impressions of his personality see the French contemporary portraits by Jacques Bardoux, *Silhouettes d'Outre-Manche*, 1909, pp. 58 sqq.; and Augustin Filon, *L'Angleterre d'Edouard VII*, 1911, pp. 199 sqq.

Biographies of Winston Churchill. See in the first place for his childhood and youth his own autobiography entitled *My Early Life, a Roving Commission*, 1930; his work entitled *The World Crisis, 1911–14*, to a great extent autobiographical, is practically confined to the preparations for war. The two excellent works by A. MacCullum Scott, *Winston Spencer Churchill*, 1905, and *Winston Churchill in Peace and War*, 1916, say nothing of Churchill's activities in the interval between his youth and his years at the War Office. There is the same lacuna in Ephesian's *Winston Churchill, being an account of the life of*, 1927. For a contemporary sketch, see the above-mentioned work of Jacques Bardoux, pp. 137 sqq.

must pursue with an unprecedented daring, if the Labour party were not to grow stronger on its left. They came forward as the two leaders of the Radical group of pacifists and advanced social reformers as opposed to the three imperialists Asquith, Grey, and Haldane—that is to say, they were two friends professing the same political creed but for that very reason rivals as well as friends. They were obviously too ambitious to be satisfied for ever with a second place. Which of the two would reach the first?

Churchill had the advantage of youth. If Lloyd George was eleven years younger than Asquith, he was eleven years younger than Lloyd George. He had the further advantage of aristocratic birth. He was the son of a junior member of a noble family, and grandson of a Duke of Marlborough. That surely still counted for something in England. In turn soldier, journalist, and politician, he won admiration not only by the diversity of his interests but by his biting eloquence and genuine gift of oratory. He had honoured the memory of his father Lord Randolph Churchill by an excellent biography which was almost a masterpiece, and it was the dream formed for him by an ambitious mother and his own to succeed where his father had failed and since his father had been unable to regenerate the Tory party by making it democratic, one day perhaps to lead the democratic party against the Tories.

But, on the other hand, it was to the advantage of Lloyd George at this juncture when the Liberal party was seeking a new leader that he was not quite so young as Churchill. Since he was in his forties he had reached that maturity which is ripe for great performance while as yet untouched by fatigue and old age. He lacked Winston's culture but his genius was at least equal, and possibly it was beginning to be realized that in one respect the election of 1906 had marked an epoch in the social history of England. She had dismissed her ancient aristocracy. It might continue to exercise its ceremonial functions, but the country no longer wished to be governed by it and Lloyd George's bourgeois career and plebeian origin were a point in his favour. And he possessed yet another advantage. Churchill was the object of all the bitterness and hostility which are the lot of a deserter from the aristocracy. Some refused to forgive his defection. Others felt uneasy in the company of this new friend, who styled himself a pacifist though he had sought fame on the battlefields of South

Africa and who at bottom seemed to have given up his true career, that of a soldier, only because even a military career was too commonplace, too monotonous to satisfy his craving for adventure. Lloyd George on the contrary, ever since he entered Parliament, had pledged himself so deeply to Radicalism that his elevation to the Exchequer could not fail to delight all the enemies of Imperialism. Moreover at the Board of Trade he had reassured the world of business and the employers generally by the spirit of conciliation he displayed on so many occasions. Therefore when Churchill and Lloyd George went respectively to the Board of Trade and the Exchequer, everyone distrusted the former, everyone entertained hopes of the latter.

2

When Churchill took over the Board of Trade he is reported to have said: 'This cake has been given me too late; Lloyd George has taken all the plums.' If the story is true, he was no doubt thinking of the two Statutes on Merchant Shipping and Patents which had won the unanimous approval of the public, and those clever arbitrations which had presented Lloyd George as the peacemaker who saved the country from social war. What was there left for Churchill to do? The Cabinet had not indeed waited for the April changes to perceive the necessity of doing something to satisfy the claims of Labour and had introduced in February a Bill establishing an eight-hours' day in the coal mines. But the mines were under the jurisdiction of the Home Office, not the Board of Trade, and it was Herbert Gladstone, the Home Secretary, who took charge of the Bill. As it is one of the three important measures of social reform passed by Parliament during the two sessions of 1908 and 1909 we must say something about it. Moreover Churchill played his part in the chequered incidents which attended its passing and application.

The demand for the legal restriction of the day's work in mines to eight hours went back not only in England but in the Continental countries to the closing years of the nineteenth century. Why in the mines rather than in any other branch of industry? Was it that humanitarian sentiment pitied more than the lot of other workers the miner's hard life in subterranean darkness?

It may have been so. But the labour of metal workers and glass makers is certainly as hard and unpleasant as the miners' underground labour, and the real reason why public opinion began to entertain the notion of limiting the hours of adult miners was that they were in a better position to make themselves heard. Around the mines—particularly the collieries—vast settlements had grown up, extremely homogeneous in their population, veritable republics which soon discovered their power to send representatives of their class to Parliament to defend their interests there.[1] When in 1874 the first two members of the working class entered Parliament, they were two miners. The great Keir Hardie was a miner elected in 1906 by a mining constituency. At the same election two other miners had been returned as candidates of the Labour Representation Committee. Thirteen others had entered Westminster with no other aid than that of their trade union and two years had passed before they amalgamated with the Labour party.

Already, before the Imperialists came into office in 1895, the House of Commons under a Liberal Government had twice affirmed the principle of an eight-hours' day in the mines.[2] But it was not until 1906 that the question could be considered ripe for solution. Till then the eight-hours' day had not received the miners' unanimous support. In Durham and Northumberland the work was so arranged that adults worked only six and a half hours, children over eight hours. The miners were afraid that if the children's day was reduced to eight hours the adults' day might be lengthened. Moreover, the miners' claim seemed exclusively and selfishly professional. If the reduction of hours led to a decrease in output and in consequence to a rise in the price of coal it was a prospect which the miners appeared to contemplate with equanimity, even perhaps with pleasure, provided their wages were increased, but a prospect calculated to alarm the general

[1] 'There is hardly another industry in which the actual conditions of production so readily provide the basis for a democratic trade union machine. The miner not only works in the pit; he lives in the pit village, and all his immediate interests are thus concentrated at one point. . . . The miners' intense solidarity and loyalty to their Unions is undoubtedly the result of the conditions under which they work and live. They are isolated from the rest of the world—even the rest of the Trade Union world; but their isolation ministers to their own self-sufficiency and loyalty one to another. They are narrow, and slow to understand others, or to feel the influence of outside public opinion. They have little skill in arguing their case before others; but they stick together' (G. D. M. Cole, *Labour on the Coal Mining Industry, 1914–1921*, 1923, p. 7).

[2] H. of C., May 3, 1893 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. xi, pp. 1841 sqq.); April 25, 1894 (ibid., vol. xxiii, pp. 1329 sqq.).

public and the great mass of labour. But these conflicts of interest which divided different branches of industry were, so to speak, swallowed up in the great movement of working-class solidarity which in January 1906 won so many victories for Labour. The miners of Northumberland and Durham accepted the programme of the eight-hours' day, and in 1908 joined the great Miners' Federation. And all the workers without distinction of trade supported the miners' claims. In their eyes the enactment of the eight-hours' day meant the acceptance by the British law of the principle, hitherto unrecognized, of legal limitation of adult labour, and would involve at no great distance of time a statutory limitation of hours for all adult workers in accordance with the programme of the Second International in support of which all the workers of Western Europe demonstrated every first of May.

In 1906 the Cabinet, still timid, refused to commit itself until the question had been examined by a Committee of Inquiry. In 1907 it introduced a Bill establishing the eight-hours' day in the mines but was unwilling to carry it any further. The report of the Committee had been published and no doubt the Government hoped it would discourage the advocates of the Reform, for without explicitly condemning the principle of the eight-hours' day, it pointed out the numerous difficulties in the way of its application. The average actual length of the working day in Great Britain was nine hours and three minutes. To reduce it to eight hours would reduce the output by 10.27 per cent—that is to say, there would be a decrease of 25,783,000 tons on the output of 1906. The experts, it is true, admitted that by increasing the number of men, reducing the number of holidays, and improving the machinery, the loss could be partly made good. But they doubted whether the change would be as beneficial as was supposed to the miner's health. It was excellent already. In their opinion, the length of the working day and the nature of the work performed varied so much according to locality that it would be impossible to apply a uniform rule. In any case the output would be diminished, and the price of coal would rise. Those countries in which the working day had been already reduced—France, Holland, and Austria—were not serious competitors with England, but the experts doubted whether under the system of the eight-hours' day the French collieries would be able to overcome the competition of Germany and America, two countries

in which there was no legal restriction of hours and in which the working day, at present shorter than in Great Britain, would be longer if the eight-hours' day were adopted. Moreover the effect of a rise in the cost of coal, difficult to estimate but undoubtedly very considerable, upon all branches of national industry must be taken into account.[1]

What of this? The pressure of labour was irresistible. Neither the Liberals, afraid of strengthening the Labour party, nor the Unionists, afraid of strengthening the Liberals, could resist it. It was in vain that a 'League of Coal Consumers' was formed to organize opposition to the change. For these 'consumers' were not the host of small buyers, but a small group of large purchasers, railway companies and industrial magnates. The opposite side disposed of more formidable weapons. 'If this Bill is not to be passed,' declared Herbert Samuel, 'and if the miners are to be left to their own devices and to the strength of their own organization, it means a coal strike, and nothing else.'[2] It was all very well for Opposition speakers to declare it scandalous for a member of the Government to make such a statement; Lord Lansdowne in language slightly more veiled[3] said the same thing when he urged the Lords to pass the Bill which the Commons had sent up to it and which actually became law on December 21.[4] The Bill did not indeed give full satisfaction to the workers' claims. Even in its original form not only did it empower the Government to suspend its operation in the event of war or of imminent national danger, or in the 'event of any grave economic disturbance due to the demand for coal exceeding the supply available', and exclude from its scope certain classes of workmen (whose working day might extend to nine hours and a half), but it also excluded from the reckoning of the eight hours one of the two journeys made by the miners between the surface and the bottom of the pit and gave the coalowners the right to impose on their men an hour's extra work for a maximum period of sixty days a year.

[1] *Miners' Eight-Hour Day Committee. First Report of the Departmental Committee appointed to inquire into the probable Economic Effect of a limit of Eight Hours to the Working Day of Coal Miners*, March 23, 1907. *Minutes of Evidence—Final Report—Report* (May 15, 1907) *and Appendices. Minutes of Evidence and Index.*

[2] H. of C., July 6, 1908 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxci, p. 1279).

[3] H. of L., December 15, 1908 (ibid., vol. cxcviii, p. 1461).

[4] 8 Edw., 7 Cap. 57: An Act to amend the Coal Mines Regulation Acts 1887 to 1905, for the purpose of limiting hours of work below the ground (*Coal Mines Regulation Act*, 1908).

And other concessions were made in the course of debate. Though the new law was to come into operation on July 1, 1909, in the mines of Northumberland and Durham the date would be postponed for another six months. And both journeys, from the surface to the bottom of the pit and back to the surface, were excluded from the reckoning of the eight hours—originally for a period of five years, finally, in virtue of an amendment introduced in the Lords, in perpetuity. But all this did not alter the fact that for the first time an important principle had been accepted by British legislation, the principle of legal restriction of the working day for all workers and not, as hitherto, only for women and children.

The Act passed, it remained to put it into operation and the difficulties involved immediately became evident. South Wales was one of the coalfields in which the hours of work had been particularly long and the Committee of Inquiry had pointed out that it would be difficult to introduce the eight-hours' day in the Welsh collieries without dislocating the entire industry. And the difficulty was even greater in 1909, a year of industrial depression, than it had been in the early part of 1907 when the Committee drew up its report. The mineowners declared that they regarded the wages agreement as automatically cancelled by the legal institution of the eight-hours' day and attempted to take immediate advantage of the clause permitting sixty nine-hour days a year and to introduce the system of double shifts. On all these points they were faced by the opposition of the miners, supported by the Miners' Federation of Great Britain. The Federation threatened to call a general strike of miners if the Welsh coalowners did not give way. At the last moment the dispute was settled by shelving the points at issue and the eight-hours' day came peaceably into operation on July 1st.

3

It was in Scotland that further difficulties arose. Here, as in South Wales, the coalowners considered the wages agreement cancelled by their obligation to reduce the hours of work. The miners on their part refused to accept any reduction of their wages below the minimum fixed by existing agreements. As in

Wales they had the support of the National Federation, which secured a vote from its members in favour of a general strike in the mines to support the Scottish miners' claims. Now that the question of a maximum working day had been settled by law, the question of a minimum wage was raised. Churchill intervened and confronted at the Board of Trade the representatives of the owners and men, 'saying that if nothing else could be done, the Government would have to pass an Act of Parliament in twenty-four hours referring the dispute to compulsory arbitration. "Mr. Churchill," replied one of the miners, "you cannot put 600,000 men into prison."'[1] A compromise was arranged. The owners conceded the minimum wage for which the men were asking, the miners a modification of the sliding scale to the owners' advantage.

This was by no means the end of the conflicts occasioned by the introduction into the mines of the eight-hours' day. We shall have to follow later on the course of a very serious struggle. But for the moment everything passed without a hitch. And the new President of the Board of Trade could congratulate himself on having, like his predecessor, had his own labour dispute to settle and having settled it with equal success. In fact the disputes which had broken out among the engineers of the north and which Lloyd George had apparently smoothed out continued and it was Churchill who in June and again in September had the honour of effecting the final settlement. But his ambition was not content with the role of an arbitrator. It aimed higher, as he made clear to Parliament in the speech he delivered in the Commons on the Eight-Hours' Bill, the only speech by a member of the Cabinet which aroused the enthusiasm of the House and of the Labour members in particular. What the workers demand, he said, is not less work but more leisure. They would no longer be content with an existence which condemned them day after day to go from bed to the mill, from the mill back to bed. They wanted time to think and read 'and cultivate their gardens'. The claim did not surprise him; what filled him with amazement was the gentlemen 'in the silk hat and white waistcoat' who had 'the coolness, the calmness, the composure, and the complacency' to ignore the existence of the need. . . . Why, it was asked, stop at the mines? But who had ever said that they ought to stop at the

[1] Lord Askwith, *Industrial Problems and Disputes*, p. 131.

mines? For himself, he regarded the Bill as 'simply the precursor of the general movement which is in progress all over the world, and in other industries besides this, towards a reconciling of the conditions of labour with the well ascertained laws of science and health.'[1] When he uttered these words he was no doubt already thinking of the Bill he would introduce the following year to fix legally no longer hours of work but wages.

4

Within the working class a species of hierarchy could be distinguished, consisting of three classes. At the top was a class of skilled labourers whose skill required a long apprenticeship. Their labour was fixed and they were congregated in large factories and urban centres. They naturally tended to form powerful unions capable of offering a permanent opposition to the employers' claims. The miners and textile workers belonged to this category. Below these was a class of workers whose trade required little or no apprenticeship and whose labour was fluctuating, but who when grouped into large masses were able, if not to form such solid unions as the miners or cotton spinners, at any rate to organize spasmodic strikes on a large scale which sometimes proved successful. Such were the dockers. Lower still was a class of unskilled labourers, exposed to all the vicissitudes of supply and demand, but, since they worked dispersed in small workshops or in their own homes, incapable of combination, and therefore rendered defenceless to a shameless exploitation, which it had become customary to call the sweating system. Karl Marx in an analysis which has become classical has explained how this system was an inevitable product of developing capitalism.[2] The introduction of machinery, since it intensifies production with a reduced number of hands, must constantly throw more and more

[1] H. of C., July 6, 1908 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxci, pp. 1330 sqq.).

[2] Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, vol. Band I. Cap. xiii, 8: 'Revolutionirung von Manufaktur, Handwerk und Hausarbeit durch die Grosse Industrie' ('Transformation of Manufacture, Handicraft and Domestic Labour by Large-Scale Industry'). S. and B. Webb's chapter 'Parasitic Trades' (*Industrial Democracy*, Part iii, Chap. iii) is directly inspired by Marx's thesis. Cf. on the sweating system and causes John A. Hobson, *Problems of Poverty; an Inquiry into the Industrial Condition of the Poor*, pp. 64 sqq.; David Schloss, *Methods of Industrial Remuneration*, Ed. 3, 1898 (Chaps. xi, xiv and xv); also in Charles Booth's comprehensive investigation, *Life and Labour of the People in London*, the chapter by Beatrice Potter entitled 'The Tailoring Trade' (First Series, vol. iv, 1902, pp. 33 sqq.).

labourers out of work. These labourers no longer needed to produce are of use to the capitalists as a 'reserve' from which they can draw the necessary supplies of labour when their workers make too exacting demands. Meanwhile these men are faced with starvation. Rather than starve they are willing to accept any wage and work in any slum.

Thus there sprang up at the base of capitalism an entire growth of small workshops not equipped with machinery and homes where the entire family slaved from morning till night for a miserable pittance. That is to say, in the very midst of capitalism types of production belonging to the era before the industrial revolution persisted, displaying all the evils of capitalist exploitation without the compensating advantages of machinery, and in which there was no factory owner whom the legislature could make responsible for his workmen's welfare. This was the condition of the clothing trade in London. Thousands of workers, usually Jews from Eastern Europe, packed in the Whitechapel slums, worked for the large tailoring and dressmaking firms of the metropolis. It was in this trade that Beatrice Potter, the future Mrs. Webb, the daughter of a wealthy capitalist, breaking away from the upper middle-class surroundings in which she had been brought up, had worked as a seamstress, had graduated in Socialism, had explored the land of grinding want and toil.

For a long time the indignation of British philanthropists had been stirred by this spectacle of suffering. But almost half a century had passed since Hood wrote his *Song of the Shirt*, before Parliament, ten or fifteen years before the close of the century, saw the need of providing a remedy. In the late 'eighties Socialism had reappeared in England and the London dockers were engaged in an agitation almost revolutionary in character. A Conservative member of the House of Lords, Lord Dunraven, obtained from his colleagues in 1888 the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the sweating system.[1] Opposition was not long delayed. The Lords had voted in a fit of enthusiasm, and the Committee had no sooner begun its labours when they took fright. Lord Dunraven retired, his place as chairman was taken by Lord Derby, a man of more moderate views; and the Committee's recommen-

[1] H. of L., February 28, 1888 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. cccxxii, pp. 1598 sqq.).

dations[1] were certainly very timid. But they were not wholly ineffective. How did the Committee of the House of Lords define the sweating system? Sweating exists, according to the report, when wages are inadequate, the work is excessively long, and the buildings in which it is done are insanitary. But why were these abuses so prevalent? The definition explained nothing, and the report did no more than reject certain current explanations with which public opinion was too easily satisfied.[2] Sweating was not specifically due to the existence of the middleman who contracted to supply certain goods and therefore gained the more on his contracts the worse he paid the domestic workers among whom he distributed the order.[3] For the worst cases of sweating, the sweating of seamstresses for example, took place in London where the large firms gave out the work directly to the home workers. To make the contract system illegal would put an end to a glaring abuse but would not go to the root of the evil. Nor were the foreign workers, the Jews of the East End, wholly responsible. Possibly they contributed to lower the general level of wages, but they were only a minority and a small minority of the sweated workers. Therefore to prohibit or restrict the immigration of foreign workers[4] would not effect very much. In consequence, unless like the Committee we prefer to leave the phenomenon unexplained, we are thrown back on the explanation given by Marx. And this was in fact the conclusion reached by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, who at that time were beginning their career as writers and social reformers.[5] What remedies then should be applied? Those Marx had pointed out, suggested by the inevitable economic development. Sooner or later the competition of the machine must put an end to the workshop without machinery and to domestic industry, even under the

[1] *First Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Sweating System; together with the Proceedings of the Committee; Minutes of Evidence and Appendix*, 1888; *Second Report*, 1888; *Third Report*, 1889; *Fourth Report*, 1889; *Fifth Report, together with an Appendix and Proceedings of the Committee*, 1890.

[2] *Fifth Report*, pp. xiii, sqq.

[3] David Schloss (*Methods of Industrial Remuneration*, chaps. xiv and xv) while recognizing that the contract system does not cover all the species of sweating is content with defining and analysing it.

[4] This was the purpose of the Aliens Act of 1905 (see my *History of the English People*, vol. v, pp. 371–5).

[5] Beatrice Potter (Mrs. S. Webb) 'The Lords and the Sweating System' (*Nineteenth Century*, No. clx, June 1890; vol. xxvii, p. 885). *Fabian Tract No. 50. Sweating; its Causes and Remedy, Published by the Fabian Society*, April 1895. Cf. J. A. Hobson, *Problems of Poverty. An Inquiry into the Industrial Condition of the Poor*, 1891.

novel forms they had assumed as an unexpected by-product of the first introduction of machinery. The atrocious conditions of such labour were sufficient to make their survival impossible. The legislator therefore should facilitate the transition from domestic labour to the factory equipped with machines in which since the employer was in actual contact with his workers the law could make him responsible for their welfare,[1] and this was in fact the tendency of measures adopted by Parliament from 1890 onwards as a result of the labours of the Lords Committee.

The Factory and Workshops' Acts Amendment Act of 1891[2] empowered the Government to require every owner of a factory or workshop to supply a list of the persons employed by him, as workmen or as contractors 'outside his factory or workshop' and the places where they were employed. This was the first legislative interference with domestic labour—and how timid it was! The statute was merely permissive and even so allowed the minister to do nothing more than gather information. An Act passed in 1895,[3] shortly before the fall of the Liberal Cabinet, imposed a fine not exceeding ten pounds upon any employer guilty of employing workmen in a building which had been condemned as insanitary by the Home Office inspector 'even if it were not a workshop' and inflicted the same penalty on an employer convicted of having given out pieces of clothing to be made up, cleaned or repaired in a 'dwelling house' where to his knowledge anyone was suffering from an infectious disease. But the statute remained a dead letter, principally because it imposed too heavy a task of supervision on the officials of the central Government. The comprehensive Factory Act of 1901[4] sought to remedy the defect by transferring from the Home Office to the County Councils the

[1] Sedgwick, a shoemaker, had already expressed the same point of view during the discussions of a Conference on Industrial Remuneration at which Sir Charles Dilke took the chair and which examined the social problem in its various aspects '. . . He described the moral evils resulting from working in the men's homes and suggested that the whole of them should be employed in factories and be subjected to the Factories Act.'

[2] 54 & 55 Vict., Cap. 75: An Act to amend the Law relating to Factories and Workshops (*Factory and Workshop Act*, 1891) Section 27, 11.

[3] 58 & 59 Vict., Cap. 37: An Act to amend and extend the Law relating to Factories and Workshops (*Factory and Workshop Act*, 1895) Section 5, 6.

[4] 1 Edw. 7, Cap. 22: An Act to consolidate with Amendments the Factory and Workshop Acts (*Factory and Workshop Act*, 1901) Section 111–115: a 'domestic factory', a 'domestic workshop' are defined as 'a private house, room or place which, though used as a dwelling, is by means of the work carried on there a factory or a workshop, as the case may be, within the meaning of this Act, and in which neither steam, water, nor other mechanical power is used in aid of the manufacturing process carried on there and in which the only persons employed are members of the same family dwelling there'.

task of prohibiting the giving out of work in buildings they deemed 'dangerous or injurious to the health'. For the first time the Act of 1901 defined what it termed a 'domestic factory' and 'domestic workshop', restricted the hours of labour for children even at home and attempted to prevent the employer deceiving the home worker as to the real amount of the payment he sent him. But all these provisions seem to have effected very little. If the Act of 1895 by making the Home Office responsible for its execution had placed the controlling authority at such a distance from its subjects that no effective supervision was possible, the Act of 1901 by transferring the task to the local authorities had put its enforcement into the hands of men who could not be trusted to enforce it. For these local authorities were under the influence of those whose interest it was that the Act should not be carried out. A Parliamentary Committee reported that in 1906 there had been 1,201 breaches of the law but only three prosecutions.[1] And the same year official statistics proved that no less than a quarter of the medical officers failed to send the Home Office the reports on the sanitary condition of workshops which they were obliged by law to draw up.[2]

5

What procedure then should be adopted? A group of women who had taken the name of the *Women's Industrial Council* and of whom Mrs. Ramsay MacDonald was the leading spirit had devoted many years to the study of the problem. For women were the principal victims of sweating. The Council had carried out an important inquiry into domestic labour in London,[3] and to secure further information had sent investigators to the English-speaking countries overseas. In America it had become acquainted with a legislative remedy which found favour with its members. On receiving the report of the women sent to investigate, Ramsay MacDonald and his wife made a personal visit to the United

[1] *Report from the . . . Select Committee on Home-Work*, 1908, p. vii.

[2] *Factory and Workshop Act*, 1901 (*Homework*) *Return to an Address of the Honourable House of Commons dated 27 March, 1906—for Return as to the Administration, in each County and County Borough during 1904, by the Local Authorities of the Homework Provisions of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, as shown by the reports of the Medical Officers of Health sent to the Home Office under Section 132 of the Act*, June 25, 1906, p. 3.

[3] *Home Industries in London*, 1st Report 1897; *Interim Report* 1906; *Third Report* 1908.

States and were converted.[1] In the states of New York and Massachusetts, and in some others, the law forbade any work to be given out unless the places where the workers did their work had been previously inspected and received a 'licence'. No employer might employ any domestic worker who had not presented this licence. It was for the workers to obtain the licence. Whereas under the system at present in force the factory inspectors and sanitary inspectors sought out or were supposed to seek out the workers, if the American system were adopted, the workers would be obliged to apply to the inspectors, if they wished to enjoy the right to work. In 1898 the Women's Industrial Council got a Member of Parliament to introduce a Bill on these lines in the Commons. But the system presented many difficulties. To carry out such a law would require an army of inspectors. And it would be inhuman to condemn to unemployment wretches whose poverty compelled them to work in a slum dwelling. There was no escape from a vicious circle. They wanted to subject domestic workshops to the same regulations as factories, but the difference between the domestic workshop and the factory consisted precisely in the circumstance that the Factory Acts could not be applied to the former.

It was then suggested that the problem should be approached from another angle. Instead of attempting to secure for the victims of the Sweating System a maximum working day, and a minimum of sanitary conditions in the places where they worked, why not, since the problem of supervision seemed insoluble, evade it by attempting to enforce a minimum wage? For some years past it had become customary for the state or the local authorities to insert into every contract contemplated or concluded with a contractor a fair-wages clause guaranteeing the workers the wage usually paid by the particular corporation or current in the locality.[2] But the first statesman to conceive in its full

[1] J. R. MacDonald, *Margaret Ethel MacDonald*, 1912, pp. 142 sqq.

[2] See the text of the *Fair Wages Resolution* adopted by the House of Commons on February 13, 1891: 'That in the opinion of this House it is the duty of the Government in all Government contracts to make provision against the evil recently disclosed before the Sweating Committee, to insert such conditions as may prevent the abuse arising from sub-letting, and to make every effort to secure the payment of such wages as are generally accepted and current in every trade for corporation works.' *Fair Wages Committee, Report of the Fair Wages Committee with Appendices*, 1908—*Minutes of Evidence taken before the Departmental Committee appointed to consider the Working of the Fair Wages Resolution of the House of Commons of 1891*, 1908. Cf. the resolution passed by the House of Commons on March 10, 1909, which differs from the former only by its more elaborate terminology

extent the plan of controlling sweating by fixing wages was the Australian Deakin, the Prime Minister of Victoria. Therefore, in the present instance, as in the suggestion to institute a system of licences, England was finding her models beyond her shores, though within the English-speaking world. Deakin had observed that employers, to evade the legislation which protected their workmen, closed their factories and gave out the work to home workers. In 1893 the Melbourne Government following the example set by the British House of Lords appointed a Committee of inquiry, and after the publication of two reports which dealt with two trades in which sweating was prevalent had passed the important Act of 1896, which laid down the principle of an apprenticeship in which the apprentices would be paid a minimum legal wage and set up special boards, whose members were elected, and which consisted half of workers, half of employers, to fix in every trade the number of apprentices, who were to be at least eighteen years old, and the minimum wage whether payable by time or by the piece. These boards were to be set up by a departmental order in every trade which seemed threatened with sweating. To begin with they were set up in four.[1]

On the benches of the House of Commons a politician sat who had once been universally regarded as marked out for the highest offices in the state but who had been debarred for ever from the ministerial bench by a scandal which was brought into the courts. Sir Charles Dilke remained, nevertheless, an influential Member of Parliament, an imperialist with Socialist leanings. He was a speaker heard with attention on questions of foreign policy,

and provides penalties for the contractor who infringes the conditions it prescribes. Charles Watney and James A. Little (*Industrial Warfare. The Aims and Claims of Capital and Labour*, p. 38) add that only powerful unions—for example, the Boot and Shoemakers', could secure the enforcement of the resolution: that is to say, it was a dead letter in those branches of industry where sweating prevailed just because the workers were unorganized.

[1] By 1908 they had been set up in fifty-two by-extensions of the law which far exceeded the domain of sweating. A special amendment was found necessary to prevent the boards fixing not minimum but normal wages. For this legislation see Albert Métin *Le Socialisme sans doctrine: La question agraire et la question ouvrière en Australie et Nouvelle-Zélande*, 1901, pp. 134 sqq.; V. S. Clark, *The Labour Movement in Australasia: A Study in Social Democracy* 1907, pp. 138 sqq.; also the important official report published under the title: *Home Office, Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the Wages Board and Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Acts of Australia and New Zealand* by Ernest Aves, 1908. We should notice—as belonging to the same order of ideas, the clause of the New Zealand Factory Act of 1901 which laid down the principle of the minimum wage for children and adolescents of both sexes, five shillings a week below sixteen, with an annual increase until the age of twenty. (Ernest Aves, *Report on . . . Australia and New Zealand*, 1908, p. 88.)

imperial organization, army reform, and labour legislation. His imperialism brought him into contact with the Colonial statesmen. His Socialist sympathies made him keenly interested in the experiments in state Socialism conducted by the Australian Governments. If we are to believe him, he had discussed with Deakin in 1887 the principle of a fixed legal wage. However that may be, in 1895 we find him still attracted by the system of licences.[1] It was not until 1900 that he began to introduce annually in the Commons a Wages' Boards Bill copied from the Victorian Act of 1896.[2]

At first it was a formality and the debate between the respective champions of licences and wage boards presented for a long time a purely academic interest. The attention of the public was engaged elsewhere, occupied by questions which had nothing to do with labour legislation. The situation was entirely changed by the powerful movement of public opinion which preceded the Election of 1906. Some dressmakers who had been fined for having made their workgirls work more than the legal hours pleaded in justification that they had been obliged to finish in time a valuable dress to be worn at Ascot, or at a charity ball. The papers expressed their indignation and aroused the indignation of their readers at the exploitation to which these unfortunate sempstresses were subject and a lady of position introduced a scandal of this kind into a play she wrote.[3] In 1906 the *Daily News* arranged an exhibition to bring home to the fashionable and middle-class public the horrors of sweating. Another was held in 1907 and was opened by Lord Milner.

6

What should be done to satisfy the obvious desire of the public? The Government appointed a Committee of Inquiry and sent one of its members to investigate the working of the Australian wages boards. The MacDonalds, opponents of the system, were

[1] H. of C., April 22, 1895 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. xxxii, p. 1465).

[2] For Sir Charles Dilke's initiative in this sphere see his evidence before the Committee of 1907 (Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on Home Work, May 13, 1908, pp. 173–4.)

[3] *Warp and Woof*, by Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton, 1904.

not converted.[1] After their visit to America they had visited Australia and did not approve of the Australian experiment. It had been conducted on too small a scale to be convincing. And in Australia society was constructed on lines so simple that it was impossible to be certain that a piece of social legislation which had proved successful there could be applied successfully to the complicated social structure of England. Nor was the problem the same in a country where there was a scarcity of women, and a country where because there were too many women, they were shamelessly exploited. The report of the Government commissioner confirmed their views. The Australian law, he reported, dealt only with one symptom of the social disease instead of attacking its root. Old age pensions and a system of universal state insurance were the reforms which should be adopted. Possibly, but in that case why persist in advocating the system of licences to which these criticisms were equally indeed even more applicable? Some immediate action must be taken against sweating and it was evident that it was not Ramsay MacDonald's but Sir Charles Dilke's remedy which had the favour of the public.

When on February 21, 1908, a Wages Boards Bill on the lines of Dilke's was read the second time and debated in the House of Commons it was clear that its principle was approved by the entire House without distinction of party or class. The only protests came from a few irreconcilable opponents of all state interference in the economic sphere. The Tariff Reformers were content to urge that the British market should be protected against the dumping of cheap goods produced by foreign sweating. The Home Secretary, Herbert Gladstone, in a speech which betrayed his embarrassment, explained that the Government could in no case accept the principle of the minimum legal wage, and that the Home Office was already too overburdened with work to assume any new functions. He asked the House to wait until the Committee had reported. Its report, published in the summer of 1908, was favourable to the system of boards,[2] and it was

[1] See Mrs. J. Ramsay MacDonald's evidence before the Committee (*Report from the Select Committee on Home Work*, 1907: Min. of Ev., pp. 211 sqq.); also J. Ramsay MacDonald, 'Sweating and Wages Boards' (*Nineteenth Century*, November 1908, vol. lxiv, pp. 748 sqq.).

[2] *Report from the Select Committee on Home Work: together with the proceedings of the Committee*, Minutes of Evidence and Appendix, 1907—also under the same title 1908. The Committee had been appointed 'to consider and report upon the conditions of labour in trades in which home labour is prevalent and the proposals, including those for the estab-

Churchill who when the session of 1909 opened took charge of the Government Bill dealing with the question. Like Herbert Gladstone he was the heir of a great name, but his inheritance was not the same. Under his control the Board of Trade did not hesitate to assume the responsibilities which frightened Gladstone at the Home Office.

The Bill[1] passed by both Houses without serious opposition set up in those trades in which wages were deemed 'exceptionally' low, Trade Boards to consist in equal numbers of representatives, elected or nominated according to circumstances, of employers and employed, and members nominated by the State, whose number must always be less than half that of the elected members. At the head of the Board were placed a chairman and a secretary appointed by the President of the Board of Trade. His choice was subject to only one restriction: he could not be himself a member of the Board. It would be the duty of the Trade Board to fix a minimum wage both for piecework and work paid by time. The Act was made applicable at first to four trades: ready-made and wholesale tailoring (branches of the dressmaking industry in which sweating was particularly rife), the making of paper or chip boxes, machine lace-making and chain-making. Altogether they employed some 200,000 workers, of whom 140,000 were women and girls. But the Act provided for its extension to other trades by an order of the Board of Trade subject to the veto of Parliament. In 1913 it was extended to five more trades, that is to some hundred and fifty to two hundred thousand additional workers.[2] Twelve years earlier the Webbs had not dared to contemplate such a measure. Nevertheless, it was a first attempt to introduce into the Labour code of Great Britain the principle of the minimum wage, which formed part of their formula the 'National Minimum'.

lishment of Wages Boards and the licensing of Work Places, which have been made for the remedying of existing abuses'. Its report, hostile to the system of licences, pronounced in favour of the system of boards. But it was not the same with the Commissioner's report. Ernest Aves had visited Australia. His conclusions are sceptical and on the whole unfavourable.

[1] 9 Edw. 7, Cap. 22: An Act to provide for the Establishment of Trade Boards for certain Trades (*Trade Boards Act*, 1909).

[2] *Trade Boards Act*, 1909. *Memoranda in reference to the Working of the Trade Boards Act*, 1913.

7

If the fundamental cause of sweating was indeed, as we have seen reason to believe, the existence of a large surplus of labour, constantly thrown onto the streets by large-scale industry and constituting a 'reserve' always ready to take the place of rebel workers, the problem of sweating formed part of the larger problem of unemployment which in 1908 once more began to engage public attention more seriously than three years before. We have already spoken of the origin of this new crisis which began in the United States towards the close of 1907, to spread immediately to England and which increased in gravity throughout the year 1908. At the end of October 1907 out of a hundred members of a union there were not five unemployed, a year later there were almost ten, and during the six months following never less than eight.[1] There was hardly a district unaffected. On the Clyde and Tyne the evil was aggravated by the strikes of which we have spoken, and this was also the case in Lancashire where there was a prolonged dispute in the cotton industry. But above all it was the East End of London, 'the Mecca of social reformers',[2] as John Burns ironically called it, and Glasgow which were the headquarters of an agitation provoked by the unemployment and systematically directed against the Labour Party as well as the two old bourgeois parties. At Glasgow at the beginning of September, riots broke out—they had been expected to be even more serious—on the occasion of Prince Arthur of Connaught's visit to the city. Throughout the country an agitator named Grey collected bodies of 'hunger marchers' who made their way, begging as they went, towards their 'Mecca', the East End of London. In London itself, bands of starving workmen setting out from the East End marched to Hyde Park and Belgravia and as near to Westminster as the police allowed, to parade their poverty under the eyes of the wealthy bourgeoisie. Their leaders spoke the language of revolution. 'If we cannot get bread for our starving wives and children, then let us rob and plunder all round.'[3] Grayson, the revolutionary member for Colne Valley, reminded his

[1] *Abstract of Labour Statistics. Board of Trade (Labour Department). Fourteenth Abstract of Labour Statistics of the United Kingdom, 1908–9*, 1911, p. 5.
[2] H. of C., October 26, 1908 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxliv, p. 1674).
[3] Williams at Tower Hill, October 28.

hearers, when his behaviour had led to his expulsion from the House,[1] that 'Parliament all along had passed measures for the good of the people only when dragged from their hands by riot and bloodshed.[2] 'Brush them aside like smoke,' said Cunninghame Graham,[3] a survivor of the revolutionary movement of 1889. Another orator was more pointed: 'Go to Westminster with bombs and make them jump!'[4] But all this unrest was in fact simply an echo of contemporary movements in Russia, where the Czar was within an ace of losing his throne, and in France where the syndicalists were spreading the idea of a general revolutionary strike and disorder tended to become chronic. We shall watch the infection spread in the following years. But these malcontents were extremely feeble revolutionaries. They did no more damage than a few broken windows. They were beggars who sought to inspire pity rather than fear. On Sunday morning the hunger marchers invaded the churches, listened quietly to the sermon the preacher delivered for their benefit and after the service took tea in his garden.

The Liberals, and still more the Labour party, were obliged to take these grievances seriously; to do otherwise would be to admit to the working-class electorate that the victory of January 1906 had been empty because the Liberals and Labour members were as powerless as the Conservatives to deal with the problem of unemployment. In the House of Commons on October 21 Asquith, addressing crowded benches in a speech[5] which was loudly applauded, enumerated all the measures actually taken or in contemplation. They were the undertaking of public works by the State, authorization of the local authorities to raise loans to the value of a million, and government grants. The Imperialists in the Cabinet took the opportunity to increase by a recruiting campaign the numbers of the Special Reserve, and lay down torpedo-boat destroyers and cruisers before the date fixed. Moreover, the Government undertook to double the Central Unemployed Fund and make its distribution more elastic. It also promised new legislation in 1909.

[1] H. of C., October 15–16, 1908 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxciv, pp. 495 sqq., 631 sqq.).
[2] Keighley, October 24.
[3] Glasgow, December 12.
[4] Hyde Park, October 16.
[5] *Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., vol. cxciv, pp. 1160 sqq.

What would be its character? Would it follow the lines of the Unemployed Workmen Bill, drawn up a year earlier by the Independent Labour party and which the Labour party headed by Ramsay MacDonald had been compelled willy-nilly to support in March 1908.[1] The Bill, intended to replace the Act of 1905 and bearing the same title, consisted of no less than fourteen clauses—was in fact rather a manifesto than a Bill in the strict sense. In substance it amounted to the demand that the local authorities instead of being merely empowered, as in the Act of 1905, to form Distress Committees, should be compelled to form them and that these Committees for dealing with unemployment in place of the very indefinite functions assigned to them in 1905 should be obliged to compile lists of all the unemployed and find them employment, or if that were impossible, relieve the men and their families. The Bill would introduce into English law the double principle of the right to live and the right to work. A committee was formed, at the head of which were Grayson, Blatchford, and Hyndman, by those Socialists who considered not only the Labour party but even the Independent Labour party too timid, to put pressure upon the Houses of Parliament to pass what had become known as the Right to Work Bill.

8

It was John Burns, the president of the Local Government Board, who in March 1908 speaking on behalf of the Government had asked the House to throw out the Unemployed Workmen Bill. Far from approving of this extension of the Act of 1905, he pronounced that measure itself mistaken, passed too hastily. It was a strange speech on the lips of the man who by the agitation he had once conducted had done more than anybody to hasten the introduction and passing of the statute. He denied however that since taking office he had done anything to hamper its execution; on the contrary he had given larger credits to the local authorities than they were in a position to make use of, and he attempted to prove by actual figures that the agricultural colonies,

[1] A Bill to provide Work through Public Authorities for Unemployed Persons; and for other Purposes connected therewith. H. of C., March 13, 1908 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxxvi, pp. 10 sqq.).

founded in pursuance of the Act to bring back the workers to the land, had been costly failures. The Unionist benches applauded, the Labour members received his speech in icy silence. Now in the meetings of unemployed he was the object of violent attacks: he was 'Ananias', 'Judas', 'who had pledged himself to the people and had sold them for two thousand pieces of gold'.[1] The unfortunate man was indignant and from one point of view his indignation was justified. He had not been bought. He was scrupulously honest. But how could he have failed to see what a ridiculous figure he cut when he sang the praises of a social order which he found after all not so ill-constructed since it had allowed such a whole-hearted Socialist as John Burns to climb so high? The Cabinet however kept its pledge to attempt a legislative remedy. If it were not to be the Right to Work Bill what should it be? They were waiting for the report of the Royal Commission appointed to examine the problem by the Unionist Government at the time of the last industrial crisis. It reported in February 1909 just as the Session of Parliament opened. The time had come to act.

The Commission which had just reported had been appointed on December 4, 1905, the very day when the Unionist Cabinet resigned, to study on the one hand the working of the Poor Laws, on the other the different methods employed outside the Poor Laws 'for meeting distress arising from want of employment, particularly during periods of severe industrial depression'. That is to say, the same year in which for the first time by setting up the Distress Committees it attempted to tackle the problem of unemployment, Balfour's Cabinet was contemplating the possibility of more ambitious measures, to consist of a general reform of the Poor Laws. The Commission was composed of eighteen members, among them Beatrice Webb. Two years before, Balfour had put Sidney Webb on the Commission appointed to inquire into the best means of amending the laws relating to disputes between employers and workmen. But whereas Sidney Webb had seriously compromised his popularity with the working class by his views on the responsibility of the Unions, Beatrice made a very different use of the Commission of 1905. She persuaded three members of the Commission to join her in signing an excellent and voluminous minority report which recommen-

[1] Victor Grayson, speech at Glasgow, October 17, 1908.

ded a number of measures bearing a strong imprint of state Socialism—everything in fact contained in the Labour Right to Work Bill which could possibly be applied in practice. Printed at the Government expense, then reprinted in a handier form[1] and circulated among the public with considerable energy and skill, it finally became almost as important as the 'majority report', and appeared to represent almost equally the opinion of the Commission. We must examine both reports together.

On one point the majority and the minority were agreed. Both recommended the abolition of the Boards of Guardians directly elected which had administered the Poor Law since 1834. Now that there were county and borough councils, charged with the general administration of the counties and boroughs, why not hand over to them the functions formerly entrusted to bodies specially elected? In 1902 the directly elected school boards had been abolished and replaced by education committees elected by the County Councils. The Boards of Guardians must be also abolished and replaced by committees elected by the Councils for the special purpose of poor relief. But the majority report was content with transferring to these committees the functions formerly exercized by the Boards of Guardians. The signatories obviously hoped, though they did not say so, that the Poor Law would be more economically administered by a committee not in direct contact with the electors.[2] The Webbs, on the other hand, the real authors of the minority report, proposed to break up the entire machinery of the Poor Law. On one point in particular, among many others, it had not fulfilled its authors' hopes. They had intended in 1834 that different treatment should be applied to infants and adults, the aged and those still capable of work, the healthy and the infirm. In fact, all had been herded together in the workhouse. Why, asked the Webbs, should it be left to the masters of the workhouses to give a free education to

[1] S. and B. Webb, *The Break-Up of the Poor Law: being Part One of the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission*, edited with Introduction by, 1909; *The Public Organization of the Labour Market: being Part Two of the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission*, edited with Introduction by, 1909. For the problem of the causes of unemployment and the remedies to be applied, see the vigorous observations, trenchant and uncompromising as is the way of youth, by a disciple of the Webbs, W. H. (now Sir William) Beveridge (*Sociological Papers*, vol. iii, 1907, pp. 323 sqq., and also by the same author: *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*, Ed. I, 1909).

[2] For criticisms of the proposed abolition of the Boards of Guardians by the orthodox Socialists see *Poor Law Minority Report.—Report of Debate between George Lansbury and H. Quelch on September 20 and 21, 1910.*

the pauper children when all children now had in principle the right to a free education? It was the business of the education authorities, as it was the business of the health committees to take care of the sick and of the asylum committees to look after lunatics and mental defectives. As for the aged, all that was necessary was to extend the application of the principle laid down by Parliament a few months earlier and provide them with old age pensions at the cost of the State. There remained the healthy adults. For their relief the minority proposed a new system which would have no connection with the old Poor Law, and lay entirely outside the scope of the majority report, a national system for abolishing unemployment by 'the organization of the labour market'.

The Webbs asked for the institution of a National Labour Exchange with branches throughout the country which would keep a regular and exact record of all the unemployed.[1] Employers would inform these Exchanges of the number of hands they required. Thus everything possible would be done, since supply and demand would be brought together throughout the country, to get rid of those 'stagnant pools' of unemployment of which the employers took advantage in particular localities to lower wages unduly. When the surplus of unemployed labour had thus been reduced very considerably, it would be reduced still further by making less use of child labour, prohibiting the employment of mothers of very small children, and reducing the railwaymen's working day to eight hours. Since, however, they could not hope to abolish unemployment completely, whatever surplus of unemployed still remained should be relieved by adopting within limits a system of compulsory insurance against unemployment. And special relief work should also be found for the unemployed, work of a useful nature and at the same time such as would re-educate them for regular employment at a trade. To perform all these new functions while taking over the administration of labour legislation hitherto confided to other departments a special Ministry of Labour should be created. Organization of the labour market, amounting in practice to organization

[1] It was a method which Germany had employed on a fairly large scale for the last ten or fifteen years as a cure for unemployment. But the German Labour Exchanges (*Arbeitsnachweise*) were either maintained by private associations, or organized by municipalities (W. H. Beveridge, *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*, 1910, pp. 239 sqq.). England was therefore preparing to outstrip Germany on the path of state control.

of labour—Saint Simon's old watchword; the right to work—Fourier's old slogan. They had made much stir in France about 1848. Now they were crossing the Channel. How many Englishmen who in 1909 were speaking the language spoken by the disciples of Fourier and Saint Simon knew the origin of the formulas which came so readily to their lips?

9

Winston Churchill took the question of unemployment out of the hands of John Burns, as at the same time he took the question of sweating out of Herbert Gladstone's. The Bill he submitted to the Commons on May 20 after explaining the day before the main lines of the Cabinet's policy on the subject[1] adopted in a modified form the recommendations of the minority report. It was therefore, as Arthur Henderson speaking on behalf of the Labour party jestingly remarked, nothing but 'the Right to Work Bill in penny numbers'.[2] Churchill, who promised in the near future a system of unemployment insurance with contributions from the workers, proposed to set up Labour Exchanges throughout the United Kingdom. The country would be divided into ten districts. In each of these the Labour Exchanges would be grouped around a clearing house for the entire area, and the work of the ten regional clearing houses similarly co-ordinated by a central clearing house in London. It was intended to establish some thirty or forty Exchanges in the large cities, forty-five in towns of lesser size, and a hundred and fifty offices of the third class in still smaller centres.

In all the large centres there would be a 'mixed consultative committee' composed in equal numbers of the workers' and employers' representatives, with a permanent official chairman. The object of this vast organization was to find employment for the workmen available, workmen for the employment available. It was understood that the officials of the Exchanges would observe a strict neutrality in the case of labour disputes. In other words the employers must not hope to make use of them to obtain 'black-

[1] H. of C., May 19, 1909 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1909, 5th Series, vol. v, pp. 499 sqq.). For a more detailed defence of the Bill see H. of C., June 16, 1909, Winston Churchill's speech (ibid., vol. pp. 1035 sqq.).

[2] H. of C., May 19, 1909; ibid., vol. v, p. 519.

legs'. In the same spirit it was laid down that a workman might always refuse the work offered him, if a union rate of wages was in operation in the district and he were offered a wage less than that rate. The economic philosophy which found expression in the reform must be clearly understood. Just as a certain type of collectivism does not contest the principle, dear to Liberal economists, that a worker's remuneration should be proportionate to the value of his work, but claims that if the principle is to be made effective state interference is necessary to establish what was called 'equality of starting point', so the 'organization of the labour market', to use Beatrice Webb's phraseology, does not contradict the principle, equally dear to the Liberal economists, which demands the utmost possible fluidity of supply and demand. But whereas the Liberal economist believes that it is sufficient to remove the artificial obstacles to this fluidity set up by particular statutes, according to the new Socialism the obstacles are natural, difficulties of movement, the ignorance of those concerned. To remove them the State must intervene. Actually, its intervention was rapid and vigorous. The two Houses passed the Bill without serious debate[1] and on January 31, 1910, eighty Labour Exchanges were opened. In London Churchill opened them in person amid the cheers of the crowd.

Responsible for introducing in a single session these two Bills, one intended to stamp out sweating, the other to get rid of unemployment, Churchill at the end of 1909 presented the appearance of a great social reformer. By the extension of its functions, as a result of which it was becoming in effect a ministry of labour as well as of trade, the Board of Trade was rising in the ministerial hierarchy, an advance recognized by the Act passed this year which permitted the salary of the President to be raised from £2,000 to £5,000.[2] What were these new functions which justified this increase of salary? In the first place, the work of arbitration and conciliation. We have already seen what an important

[1] 9 Edw. 7, Cap. 7: An Act to provide for the Establishment of Labour Exchanges and for other Purposes Incidental thereto (*Labour Exchanges Act*, 1909).

[2] 9 Edw. 7, Cap. 23: An Act to remove the Statutory Limitation on the Salary of the President of the Board of Trade (*Board of Trade Act*, 1909). It began by repealing an Act of 1829 which limited the salary to £2,000 so as to make it possible to raise the salary of the President of the Board of Trade, together with the salary of the President of the Local Government Board, to the same level as that of the Secretaries of State. A second clause added at Churchill's request provided that the actual holder of the office should not benefit by the increase (H. of C., April 20, 1909; *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1909, 5th Series, vol. iii, p. 1493).

part the numerous meetings between representatives of the workers' and employers' organizations, held under the aegis first of Lloyd George, then of Churchill, had come to play in the social history of the country. In September 1908 to make this work easier Churchill had three panels set up by his department, a panel of chairmen, a panel of employers, a panel of workmen so that a tribunal of arbitration composed of three suitable persons would be in readiness to intervene at the first sign of any dispute that might threaten.[1] The importance of this function may be judged by the fact that the machinery provided by the Conciliation Act of 1896, which had been utilized only 209 times in a period of ten years, was employed in thirty-nine instances in 1907, in sixty in 1908 and in fifty-nine in 1909, that is 158 times in three years.[2] But the Board of Trade had a further office to fulfil, to enforce the social legislation. And these statutes, ever more numerous and more complicated—particularly the Labour Exchanges Act—required for their execution a host of officials. A very serious change was taking place and for the first time attracting notice. England was becoming bureaucratic.

According to the Census of 1911 the Civil Service employed 162,000 officials as compared with 116,413 in 1901, 79,449 in 1891, 50,485 in 1881. According to the same census the local government employed 20,985 persons in 1881, 24,930 in 1891, 36,870 in 1901, 64,087 in 1911. The increase during the last decade had exceeded 100 per cent. It was a body of officials formidable by their numbers, formidable also for the delicate nature of their functions, for the performance of which they were invested with powers almost discretionary. For it was impossible for Parliament to draw up statutes in such minute detail that the text provided for every concrete case to which they were applicable. A statute was in current parlance only a 'skeleton'. It was for the official to clothe the skeleton with flesh,[3] by administrative rules

[1] *Board of Trade Memorandum*, September 15, 1908.

[2] Lord Askwith, *Industrial Problems and Disputes*, 1920, p. 126.

[3] H. of C., June 16, 1909, G. P. Gooch's speech: 'This Bill as it is before us is a mere skeleton. The flesh and blood will be put on it by means of the Regulations which will be issued by the Board of Trade (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1909, 5th Series, vol. vi, p. 1028). Cf. Lloyd George's interesting observations when he introduced his Merchant Shipping Amendment Bill: 'It is very difficult to carry Acts of Parliament nowadays, under any scheme, with its present congestion of business. . . . It is inconvenient to require an Amending Act of Parliament whenever a new regulation seems to be necessary to meet the changing circumstances of our mercantile marine such as have taken place during the last twenty years. Who can foresee what may happen? There may be a totally different

or 'orders'. The number of these orders had become so great and the need that the public should be informed of them so urgent that from 1893 onwards an official collection was published more bulky from the outset than the annual collection of statutes and increasingly voluminous every year.[1] Moreover, it very soon became impossible in practice to allow anybody who wished to appeal to the ordinary courts from any administrative decision whatever. The courts would have been unable to cope with the work and the administrative machine would have been broken down. Therefore, since in England, unlike the Continent, there exists no special judicature to settle disputes between the state and the individual, the custom grew up—to be sanctioned within a few years by a decision of the Lord Chancellor[2]—of regarding the officials as free to decide, without recourse to the courts, specific cases submitted to them concerning the detailed application of Acts of Parliament.[3]

state of things, and what we want is to be able by means of an Order in Council, if necessary, to introduce regulations applicable to the changing circumstances of the hour, without having to have constant resort to the House of Commons to obtain sanction for every change that may be required' (H. of C., *Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., vol. cliv, p. 251).

[1] *Statutory Rules and Orders other than those of a Local, Personal or Temporary Character, issued in the year 1893* [and onwards]: *with a list of the more important statutory orders of a local character, arranged in classes and an index. Published by Authority.* The publication was made in obedience to the Rule Publication Act (55 Vict., Cap. 66) 1893. 'Something of the extent of this subordinate legislation may be indicated by comparing its volume with that of the parliamentary statutes. The annual volume of published general statutes contains from 80 to 100 Acts of Parliament, and from 500 to 600 pages. In addition to the public general statutes there are each year several volumes of local and private acts, including provisional orders and confirming acts which, while formally passed by Parliament, are the result of the actions of government departments and small private bill committees. But beyond this the annual volumes of Statutory Rules and Orders of a general character issued without parliamentary action, contain about ten times as many measures as the public general acts and run from 1,500 to 3,000 pages. Besides these there are each year several hundreds of rules and orders of local application, listed only by title in the annual volume' (Cecil T. Carr, Delegated Legislation 1926: *University of Illinois, Studies in the Social Sciences*, September 1925, vol. xiii, No. 30, p. 8).

[2] Board of Education v. Rae and others (1911); Local Government Board v. Arlidge (1915). Cf. W. A. Robson, *Justice and Administrative Law*, pp. 141–2, 143 sqq.

[3] These administrative regulations which amount to genuine laws constitute what Sir Frederick Pollock (*Encyclopædia of the Laws of England, being a new abridgment of the eminent legal Authorities*, vol. i, 1897, General Introduction, p. 6) proposed to term 'delegated legislation'. The name caught on. It serves as the title of three lectures given at Cambridge in 1921 by Cecil T. Carr which he published in book form the same year. He attributes it however to Sir Courtenay Ilbert. For the nature not only quasi-legislative but quasi-judicial of the administrative decisions see the recent work by William A. Robson, *Justice and Administrative Law: A Study of the British Constitution*, 1928. But the first writer before the war who seems to have been struck by the importance of the problem is the German D. Otto Koelreuther, *Verwaltungsrecht und Verwaltungsrechtssprechung im modernen England*, 1912. See in particular p. 223: 'If we consider the unsystematic fashion in which English law has regulated the power of government officials to make decisions, we cannot escape the feeling that it is not considered desirable that the public should realize that a powerful

The English system of entrance examinations for all branches of the Civil Service, for which moreover candidates were extremely plentiful, ensured an excellent body of civil servants. Was it a fair ground for complaint that the subjects set in these examinations were such as to favour the graduates of the two great universities, so that the government departments in London were staffed by members of the ruling aristocracy? Or if this were an exaggeration that at any rate this favoured class constituted in every department an all-powerful clique and since there were no examinations for promotion monopolized all the high positions.[1] Even if this were true, was it to be lamented? Was it not rather a matter for congratulation that an aristocracy which throughout the nineteenth century had occupied itself so zealously in Parliament with the conduct of national business should now put itself at the head of the administrative departments? Was there not rather genuine ground for anxiety in the new system adopted by the Liberal Cabinet of appointing the officials of the Labour Exchanges without holding an examination? Competitive examination, it was argued by those who advocated its abandonment, could not furnish the necessary guarantees for the proper exercise

bureaucracy has gradually grown up in its midst whose action is to a large extent exempt from parliamentary control. And if we adopt the point of view that the monopoly which the Courts asserted as guardian of the constitution during the eighteenth century expressed in the clearest and most mature form the principle of a state founded on law, we must regard the latest development in England, if not as a retrogression, at least as a deflection of the straight path which the development of English constitutional law has taken hitherto.' We shall gauge better the importance of the change undergone in this respect by British institutions and public opinion, if we compare with the earlier editions of A. V. Dicey's, *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*, the introduction to the 8th edition written in 1915.

[1] A. Lawrence Lowell, *The Government of England*, vol. i, p. 163: '. . . By far the larger part of the successful candidates come from one or the other of (the) two great universities.' But the composition of the universities had undergone a profound change during the last few years and this did not mean that these Oxford and Cambridge graduates had all come from the seven great Public Schools. See the figures given by A. Ponsonby (*The Decline of Aristocracy*, 1912, pp. 295–6). The number of successful candidates from the seven great Public Schools was 16 out of 97 in 1906, 18 out of 92 in 1907, 13 out of 82 in 1908, 17 out of 89 in 1909, 17 out of 113 in 1910. Nevertheless the same author can write (pp. 117–18): 'The permanent Civil Service, partly recruited from this upper class, in close contact with it, and blindly on the side of law, authority and tradition, extends its influence and tightens the supremacy of the executive with bureaucratic bonds.' It is of interest to note how the decline of imperialism in conjunction with the growing influence of state socialism seems to have favoured the recruiting of the Home Civil Service. See Lord Selbourne's speech at Oxford, October 27, 1911: 'When I was at Oxford the best brains of Oxford, when they had a chance, went to the Indian Civil Service. It was only the second best as a rule who went to the Home Civil Service. Now all the best men put "H" first, "I" second, and "C" third. The best men are all prepared to take the least risks. Do you think what it means when an Oxford man, the pick of his year, says: "I would rather be a clerk in the Home Civil Service than go to India or the Colonies"?'

of these novel and delicate functions. What was wanted was not so much special knowledge or a high standard of general education as acquaintance with industrial and labour circles. No doubt, but the door was thrown open all the same to favouritism, personal influence and political preferences.

When all is said, it is beyond doubt that the excellence of British social manners, the courteous tolerance of those in command, and the obedience of their subordinates confer on the British Civil Service, as on other British institutions, qualities which distinguish it from similar institutions on the Continent. It is nevertheless indubitable that it was acquiring an importance altogether new in the life of the nation. At the Board of Education there was Sir Robert Morant's policy; in Ireland Sir Antony MacDonnell's, at the Admiralty Sir John Fisher's. And it was this policy of the head of the department which alone counted; the successive Ministers had been simply the Parliamentary mouthpieces of these great men of action. Parliament, it is true, revolted against the three, and it was indeed this revolt which made the names of Fisher, MacDonnell, and Morant so well known. But there were other secret dictators whose action was the more powerful because no one spoke of them. Askwith, the Comptroller-General, chief arbitrator of the Board of Trade, made it a rule, each time an industrial dispute was submitted to him, to secure the signature by the parties concerned of a permanent collective contract in such terms as would obviate future disputes. He thus built up piece by piece throughout the United Kingdom a vast written code governing the relations between employers and employed,[1] which if not strictly speaking law nevertheless possessed a very real binding force. Sir Herbert Llewellyn Smith prepared and organized the system of Labour exchanges. Sir Ernest Aves did the same for the Trade Boards. Who outside England ever heard of these men? And how many Englishmen even heard of them? Nevertheless, in the background of political life they played a part probably more important than the great political figures who occupied the stage while they worked in the wings.

Thus under a Liberal Cabinet the social creed of the Webbs—though they did not show the least gratitude to the Government for this—triumphed, a doctrine of very different colour from the official doctrine of the Labour party. The small apartment occu-

[1] Lord Askwith, *Industrial Problems and Disputes*, 1920, p. 137.

pied by the MacDonalds in Lincoln's Inn Fields was crowded at their evening receptions by a gathering typical of so-called 'advanced' circles. There were Utopians and philanthropists of every description, friends of the negro and the Hindu, anti-vivisectionists and vegetarians, militant labour leaders, revolutionaries from the Continent. In Grosvenor Road at the Webbs' the sort of people of whom we have just spoken did not feel altogether at home. There you would meet mingling with intellectual Fabians, high officials, politicians belonging to the most moderate sections of the House and representatives of fashionable society. The Webbs had their enemies who accused them of snobbery. It was a calumny without the slightest foundation. The uncompromising purity of their doctrine led to the resignation of one of the most important of the industrial magnates who had consented to join the governing body of the London School of Economics.[1] Of all English people they were at bottom the most remote from snobbery, and the most contemptuous of it. They pursued methodically and fanatically the end they had proposed to themselves, to transform the old England of individualism and *laissez faire* into an England organized from above. And this School of Economics which they had founded and of which they were the guiding spirits was intended by them to train the bureaucracy of a future collectivist England.[2] Every ambitious young man knew that if he got into touch with them and convinced them of his ability, they would be in a better position than anybody else to assist his career and place him where in their opinion he was best fitted to serve the state.[3] Listen to one of their circle, the young Keeling, who had asked them to put him on the right path. When the Webbs advised him to take up his residence in a working-class constituency, and there undertake political and above all administrative work, he enthusiastically obeyed, settled in a suburb of South London, and dreamed of persuading all his

[1] We refer to Lord Claud Hamilton whose resignation was a protest against a speech delivered by Sidney Webb at the opening by the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of its central offices in London. For the entire incident see Sidney Webb's letter to Lord Claud Hamilton of October 22, 1910 (*The Times*, October 23, 1910).

[2] For the function attributed to the School of Economics by the Webb group see Haldane's speech at Reading on October 27, 1906, in which he announced his intention to make the institution a training college in the art of administration for soldiers as well as for civilians.

[3] For the Webb's salon see the picture painted by H. G. Wells in his 'New Machiavelli' (Beatrice Webb appears under the name Altiora), a picture which, though intended as a satire, constitutes nevertheless an involuntary tribute to this remarkable woman.

friends, the Socialist intellectuals of Cambridge, to follow his example. 'By God! if we could capture a Borough Council or a Board of Guardians we would shift something.'[1] And in his youthful fervour he gave his thoughts a lyrical note foreign to the prose of his matter-of-fact teachers. 'I was wondering yesterday why the devil the world didn't found a religion on Cæsar instead of on Christ. Of course, one feels instinctively that it couldn't be done. But to me it also seems that Cæsar was a far greater personality . . . Perhaps it wasn't so incongruous as it was made to appear by damned Christian scholars. Worship isn't the same thing as prayer.'[2]

II LLOYD GEORGE AT THE EXCHEQUER

1

For all that has been said of the almost revolutionary importance of the legislation passed on Churchill's initiative—the introduction of the principle of the minimum legal wage, the institution of a general system of Labour Exchanges—it would be a mistake to suppose that at the end of 1909 he occupied the centre of the stage. The very calm with which his two Bills were debated in both Houses proves that neither the Unionist minority in the Commons, nor the Unionist majority in the Lords dreamt of giving battle on this ground. They were occupied in fighting on a wider front a more dangerous foe. When at the end of 1909 Churchill collected in one volume the speeches he had delivered on the social question during the past four years he asked the Radical journalist Massingham for a preface, and the outstanding passage of that preface is perhaps that in which Massingham sang the praises not of Churchill's statutes but of the Budget which Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had just carried through the Commons. 'If it prospers, the social policy for which it provides prospers too. If it fails, the policy falls to the ground.'[3] In fact, at this date not Churchill but Lloyd George was the popular hero, the mouthpiece of British Radicalism. In his hands the

[1] Letter to Mrs. Townsend, July 21, 1908 (Keeling, *Letters and Recollections*, 1918, p. 31).
[2] Letter to Mrs. Townsend, July 6, 1912 (ibid., pp. 125–6).
[3] *Liberalism and the Social Problem* by the Right Hon. Winston Spencer Churchill, 1909; Preface, pp. xiii–xiv. (The Preface is dated October 26, 1909.)

Budget of 1909 became the ram for which the Liberals had been looking ever since 1906 to batter down the walls of the Upper House. To grasp the antecedents of this fiscal innovation we must trace the history of successive Budgets from the point where we left it in the last volume when we analysed the first Budget which followed the peace of Vereeniging.

Between the beginning of 1904 and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's death, the Budget had been twice presented by Austen Chamberlain before the Election of 1906, twice by Henry Asquith after it. But it would be a mistake to conclude that a sharp line divided Austen Chamberlain's Budgets from Asquith's. The first Budget drawn up by Asquith on the very morrow of the General Election merely continued Chamberlain's. But the Budget of 1907 is already paving the way for Lloyd George's great Budget of 1909. Austen Chamberlain had been appointed, we remember, Chancellor of the Exchequer at the remodelling of the Cabinet which followed his father's retirement in October 1903. His appointment to this important post was a visible proof to the world that there was no rupture between Balfour and the apostle of protection. On the other hand, a species of compact had been concluded between the Unionist leaders and Joseph Chamberlain when the latter left the Cabinet. It was agreed that no departure should be made from the fiscal traditions of the country until his independent propaganda had eventually converted it to protection. During his two years at the Exchequer, Austen Chamberlain observed the agreement faithfully. He practised economy, reducing the naval and military expenditure while the increase of the civil estimates was slow. The reduction of the navy estimates in 1905 was sensational, amounting to £3,530,000, that is about a tenth of the navy estimates for the previous year. Moreover, he continued to apply strictly the policy of debt reduction. Even when in 1904 the industrial crisis produced a deficit he did not touch the sinking fund. The following year he increased it by a million pounds to pay off within ten years ten million of the floating debt. Since he refused to touch the sinking fund he was obliged to have recourse to taxation to make up the deficit, but the increases of taxation he submitted to Parliament were such as to win the approval of all parties. An increase in the duties on tobacco had an intentionally protectionist aspect and for that reason caused warm debates in the Commons.

But it was a tax which produced very little revenue. Apart from this Chamberlain sought to raise two sums of two million from two different sources. On the one hand he put twopence on to the tea duty. There was nothing protectionist in this; for the duty did not protect any home producer and damaged the colonial producer. On the other hand he put a penny on to the income-tax, which returned to the figure of a shilling in the pound which it had reached for the first time during the Boer War. In peacetime the increase was an application of the fiscal policy advocated by the Liberals. The following year when the economic position had improved and the Budget showed a large surplus, it was the tea duties which were reduced to their former figure. The income-tax remained at a shilling.

In 1906 Asquith followed the same policy. He reduced the army estimates, which at the close of the financial year had fallen by a million and the navy estimates which fell by almost two million. He added a further million to the sinking fund, and though an additional three million was placed at his disposal by the fact that certain bonds of the floating debt were due for redemption, instead of reducing taxation accordingly, he placed the sum at the disposition of the Treasury to pay off whatever portion of the debt it seemed desirable to pay off. He also pledged himself to combat the practice which had become usual in the Government departments for many years past of borrowing money for the execution within a fixed term of years of urgent public works. From the administrative standpoint it offered the great advantage of making it possible to carry out these works by methods more akin than usual to those employed in private enterprise. But it shocked the financial purists, eager to safeguard the principle of a consolidated Budget. It also shocked the champions of the sinking fund, who saw a host of private debts accumulating against the state, at the very time that the sinking fund was paying off the public debt. Finally, and this was perhaps the gravest objection, the practice, when employed by the War Office and the Admiralty, was regarded by the Radicals as a contrivance for withdrawing their expenditure from Parliamentary control. Asquith satisfied these critics by promising that so far as the military and naval expenditure was concerned, no more loans of this kind would be raised. The income-tax remained at

the figure, henceforward regarded as normal, of a shilling, but the taxpayer was relieved by abolishing the tax imposed in 1901 on the importation of coal, taking a penny off the tea duty, and almost entirely abolishing the new duties on tobacco imposed two years before—three measures of free trade.

The heavy increase of expenditure involved by the Boer War had caused serious dissatisfaction in the country and it was only to be expected that the Unionist Cabinet on the eve of the Election should do its utmost to show that this inevitable burden had been temporary, and prove itself capable of reducing the Budget to its legitimate size. It was equally natural that the new Cabinet on the morrow of its victory at the polls when it had just denounced at countless public meetings the extravagances of its predecessor should concentrate its entire attention when it drew up its first Budget, on economy, which it carried to the utmost possible extent. And Asquith promised to do even more in future 'in the reduction of expenditure, in the repayment of debt'. He added, however, 'and in the readjustment of the incidence of taxation'.[1] By these words he raised a further problem, which the Unionist Cabinet had refused to consider, but which a Radical Cabinet was obliged to face, the problem of effecting such a reform of taxation as would relieve the poor taxpayer at the cost of the wealthy. At once another question arose. Was it to be the simple readjustment of a burden whose total amount would not be increased? Could they hope to effect sufficient economies in the army and navy estimates to provide for the new costs of a democratic Budget without increasing, possibly even decreasing, the amount of taxation? The Opposition speakers expressed their doubts. 'The House of Commons', said one of them,[2] 'has committed itself to the principles of old age pensions, of the supplying of free meals to school children, of a large increase in the cost of education, and the payment of Members of Parliament. These schemes all require money'. We must attempt to determine a little more exactly how the problem of direct taxation presented itself to British statesmen in 1906, before we describe the action they took to solve it in the years which followed.

[1] H. of C., April 30, 1906 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clvi, p. 307).
[2] H. of C., May 1, 1906, W. H. Cowan's speech (*Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., vol. clvi, pp. 438–9).

2

Direct taxation in England was based on the income-tax. The income-tax was not progressively graduated but bore a fixed proportion to the amount of income taxed, with reductions for very small incomes. Incomes below £160 were entirely free of tax, below £400, £500, £600 and £700 they were subject to reductions which became smaller as the income increased. Above £700 the full tax was paid and its rate, which had exceeded a shilling in the pound during the Boer War and was a shilling when the Liberals took office, remained the same however large the income. Nor did the collection of the tax present an inquisitorial character. Two-thirds of it were deducted at the source in such a way that verification was easy and did not involve a full declaration of the taxpayer's income, unless the latter wished to make one to prove his title to the reductions allowed for small incomes. Nevertheless, the tax constantly increased. Its produce had exactly doubled during the ten years of Unionist Government rising from £15,600,000 in 1894 to £31,350,000 in 1905. Further, in addition to this proportional levy large fortunes were subject to the steeply graduated succession duties which the Liberal Government had introduced in 1894, the year before it was replaced by a Unionist Cabinet. Since that date the produce of these succession duties had almost doubled. A French financial expert writing in 1905 expressed his admiration for 'the self-sacrifice' with which 'the privileged class, a minority increasingly restricted in numbers on whose shoulders alone the burden of income-tax falls submits—in the public interest—to painful and inevitable ruin, an example which few other aristocracies could display'.[1]

Throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century the income-tax, subject as it was to a regular and finally to an annual vote of the Commons, had been regarded as a temporary expedient. Its rate was moderate and it was employed as an exceptional resource to defray the cost of a war or solve a temporary financial difficulty. Its reduction was promised, it was actually reduced and it was hoped that one day it might be possible to abolish it entirely. When Austen Chamberlain introduced the Budget of 1904 he

[1] René Stourm, *Systèmes généraux d'impôts*, Edition 2, 1905, p. 147.

was faithful to this tradition, and held out the hope of future reductions. But at the same time he raised the rate from elevenpence to one shilling in the pound, and this proportion of a twentieth began, it would seem, to be considered normal. But if the income-tax were to be a permanent burden of such heavy weight on the taxpayer it was no longer possible to be content with the careless method of collection and the rough and ready assessment which had been tolerated in the past. Problems with which the legislature had hitherto shown practically no concern became urgent on the eve of the Election of 1906.

The first of these was the evasion of payment. Though as the result of measures adopted in 1885 and in 1900 the abuse had apparently diminished, it still existed on a large scale. Ritchie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1903, deplored its extent and suggested that its diminution would be perhaps the best means by which the rate of the income-tax could be lowered without loss of revenue.[1] A committee appointed to inquire into the reforms which might be effected in the system of collecting the income-tax explained in detail how this evasion of payment was practised. Of 600,000 declaration forms sent to taxpayers, 200,000 were not returned, and the assessment was made by the Commissioners. By what method? The Commissioners proceeded gradually raising the assessment annually until the taxpayer protested and the number of times they could increase the assessment without protest measured the distance between the original assessment and the taxpayer's actual income.[2] When a private business was turned into a public company and a strict account had to be given of the profits made, the glaring extent of the previous frauds was revealed. Foreign companies operating in England practised with English assistance a host of tricks which enabled them to evade payment entirely.[3] According to a contemporary estimate the

[1] H. of C., April 19, 1904 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxxxiii, p. 560).

[2] H. of C., April 23, 1903, speech by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Ritchie: 'One of the most successful modes of evasion is to make no return of income, the income-tax payer preferring to be assessed by the Commissioners. In this particular case my friend saw that the particular firm, of which he knew something, had adopted this plan and the Commissioners had assessed them, I think it was at something like £3,000 or £4,000. My friend said: "What! £3,000 or £4,000; that is preposterous! These people are making gigantic profits." The Commissioner replied: "Then, we will make it £5,000." "£5,000," my friend said, "put it up to £55,000." The Commissioners acted upon the advice and they paid it.' (*Parli. Deb.*, 4th Ser., vol. cxxi, p. 254).

[3] For these ingenious devices see an excellent article in the *Economist* entitled 'Can Income Tax be avaded?' (*Economist*, October 8, 1915.) The article discusses the extremely inconsistent judgments of English and Scottish Courts in this respect and the debates on

loss to the revenue from these frauds in respect of commercial profits amounted to a fifth of the amount due.[1] To invest money abroad, let the income accumulate, invest that income abroad and eventually bring back the income transformed into capital was another method employed to cheat the revenue. The committee suggested remedies. Declaration of income should, they proposed, be made compulsory, the forms be drawn up in clearer terms and the penalties imposed better adjusted, rendered more severe, and published.[2] In 1907, 1914, and 1915 the legislature would act upon these recommendations and even devise additional measures to enforce payment.

These were not the only problems raised by the income-tax. In 1905 all incomes were taxed at the uniform rate of a twentieth. This was all very well. But was it in accordance with equity, in other words with genuine 'equality' that incomes which were the fruit of the taxpayer's personal work and those which were not should pay the same tax? This was the problem of the 'differentiation' of incomes. And how could it be maintained that the principle of equality was observed because the tax bore the same proportion to the income whatever its size? A tax of £50 on an income of £1,000 was certainly heavier than a tax of £500 on an income of £10,000. If there was to be genuine equality the tax must be increased in a proportion in excess of the increase in the income taxed. This was the principle of 'graduation'. As regards the income-tax the reductions for small incomes already constituted an indirect and timid application of the principle. Why not apply it more consistently? Attempts had been made to solve these problems of differentiation and graduation as regards the succession duties, why not do the same thing for the

the latest Finance Bill, 1915, which included provisions designed to render these frauds impossible, H. of C., November 4 and 17, 1915 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 1915, 5th Series, vol. lxxv, pp. 1856 sqq.). 5 & 6 Geo., 5 Cap. 89: An Act to grant certain Duties of Customs and Inland Revenue (including Excise), to alter other duties and to amend the law relating to Customs and Inland Revenue (including Excise) and the National Debt and to make further provision in connection with Finance (*Finance* [*No.* 2] *Bill 1915*) Section 31.

[1] L. G. Chiozza Money, *Riches and Poverty*, 1905, p. 13.

[2] *Income-Tax Committee: Report of the Departmental Committee on Income-Tax*, 1905, pp. v sqq. See also J. C. Stamp, who, writing a little later, sought to prove by solid arguments that the abuse did not exist on a very large scale (*British Incomes and Property: The Application of Official Statistics to Economic Problems*, 1916, pp. 315 sqq.). To these evasions of the income-tax we must add the evasion of death duties by gifts between the living. For this form of evading taxation see Galsworthy's novel, *The Forsyte Saga*. Measures were adopted in the Budget of 1909 to make the practice more difficult.

income-tax? Already in 1904 when Austen Chamberlain set up his committee to inquire into the evasion of taxation, Herbert Samuel and Richard Haldane wanted its scope extended to these further questions.[1] They were not successful. Chamberlain, hostile to the Gladstonian tradition in finance, in so far as it involved the maintenance of complete free trade, became its champion when it was proposed to introduce into British fiscal policy what seemed a first instalment of Socialism.[2] But after the Election of 1906, when Haldane and Samuel were both members of the Government, a committee was appointed to inquire into the problem and Samuel was its chairman. Set up on May 4 it worked quickly and reported on November 29.[3] The report recommended that the limit of reductions at the lower end of the scale should be raised from £700 to £1,000 and that a 'differentiation' between earned and unearned incomes should only be applied to incomes above £3,000. By combining this 'degression' and 'differentiation' the first step would be taken to satisfy the advocates of a democratic reform of the income-tax. At the same time the report recommended that the taxpayer should be compelled to disclose his income, that is to say that the system of a compulsory declaration of total income should be introduced into British legislation.

[1] H. of C., March 1, 1904, Herbert Samuel's speech (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxxx, p. 1360). H. of C., April 19, 1904, R. B. Haldane's speech (ibid., vol. cxxxiii, p. 582).

[2] H. of C., April 19, 1904 (ibid., vol. cxxx, pp. 560 sqq.). Austen Chamberlain agreed however in reply to two questions by Herbert Samuel to obtain information as to what steps had been taken abroad or in the Colonies to graduate the income-tax. *Graduated Income-Tax (Colonies) Return to an Address of the Hon. the House of Commons, dated 11 August, 1904—for Return showing which of the Colonies have established systems of graduated Income-Tax, or of Income-Tax levied at different rates on earned or unearned incomes, or both, with particulars in each case of the rates of tax and the system of assessment and collection*, June 20, 1905. *Further Return*—August 1, 1905. *Miscellaneous, No. 2* (1905) *Reports from H.M.'s representatives abroad respecting graduated Income-Taxes in Foreign States*, April 1905. The report is preceded by an introductory report written by Bernard Mallet, Commissioner of Inland Revenue. The impression received from reading these two collections is that very little had been done in this direction by the Colonies and that, if the English Radicals desired to carry out this reform of the Income-Tax, they must seek their models on the continent of Europe.

[3] *Report from the Select Committee on Income-Tax, together with the proceedings of the Committee, minutes of evidence, and an Appendix.* The Committee's terms of reference were 'to inquire into and report upon the practicability of graduating the Income-Tax and of differentiating for the purpose of the Tax, between Permanent and Precarious Incomes'.

3

Such were the very moderate conclusions reached by the Committee, but its final suggestion was meaningless unless it contemplated the eventual adoption of a radical reform. Actually the report pointed out that once its recommendations had been adopted it would be easy to raise later on the rate of tax without affecting any taxpayer whose income was below £3,000 a year. Only the small minority of wealthy persons would have to bear the burden of the increase and it was this minority which must therefore be compelled to disclose their total income. This left the door open to those members of the committee who had formed an entirely novel conception of what a Budget should be. It should not, they held, be content with compelling every citizen to contribute to the needs of the state in accordance with his means on a basis of genuine equality. The financial machinery of the state must be employed to remedy the inequality of wealth, to make the burden upon the rich heavier, and lighten the burden upon the poor or more drastically to impoverish the rich and enrich the poor. It was perhaps prudent not to pronounce categorically against these Radical measures. For if it seemed inadvisable to attempt their immediate application, the fact could not be ignored that those members of the committee who advocated them represented a powerful current of public opinion which might become formidable. We have already seen the effect produced by Bernard Shaw's attacks on the hypocrisy of a Liberalism which accepted poverty as inevitable. We have witnessed the campaign of emotional appeal conducted by philanthropists against the horrors of sweating. And every play or novel Galsworthy wrote attempted to shake the confidence of the middle-class in what it called its morality, a morality whose mainspring seemed to be the desire for wealth and the instinct of property. Whence did this Socialistic demand for equality derive its new impetus? Had Marx proved a true prophet, and was society actually witnessing a steady decrease in the number of the wealthy, the increasing pauperization of the masses? The evidence gives no support to this view.[1] Or was it that a phase of economic

[1] According to the extremely detailed calculations of A. L. Bowley (*The Change in the Distribution of the National Income 1880–1913*, 1920, pp. 16 sqq.) the number of taxpayers

life in which the prices of all commodities were rising, and the price of labour alone lagging behind, inevitably aroused the discontent of the working classes? But though such an explanation would account for the disaffection among the workers, it does not explain why the middle-class intellectuals and philanthropists made common cause with the malcontents. The causes of the revolt which was now gathering strength were of the moral order. We are witnessing the decay of that Puritan asceticism which made the proletariat ashamed of its poverty as of a crime for which it was responsible and the rich regard their own enrichment by work and saving as the fulfilment of a duty. The rich man now wanted to enjoy himself, to display his luxury, to make a splash, and the revolt of the intelligentsia and the workers was the reply to this ostentation.

The economists supported by statistics these denunciations of the men of letters. The figures showing the revenue produced by the Estate Duty, the new tax on inheritances introduced in 1894, had revealed for the first time the extreme inequality in the distribution of the national wealth.[1] And the revelation was made the more striking by the fact that the introduction about the same time of a similar reform into the French system of inheritance made possible an instructive comparison between the two countries in this respect. There were twice as many small estates (of a value between £500 and £1,000) in France as in the United

with an income of over £160 a year remained during the thirty-three years under consideration proportionately the same, the number of manual labourers decreased, the increase was in the number of small taxpayers whose income was below £160, in other words, members of the lower middle-class. For the producing power of this marginal figure of £160 see the evidence given by Chiozza Money who appeals to the opinions already expressed by Marshall before the Select Committee on Income-Tax of 1906 (p. 48). '£3 a week does enable a man to command a fair quantity of the necessary comforts of life and to properly educate his children and so on. I regard that as a sensible line on which to begin your income-tax scale.' Cf. Lloyd George, H. of C., April 29, 1909: '. . . Income-Tax in this country only begins when the margin of necessity has been crossed and the domain of comfort and even gentility has been reached. A man who enjoys an income of over £3 a week need not stint himself and his family of reasonable food or clothing or shelter. There may be an exception in the case of a man with a family whose gentility is part of his stock-in-trade or the uniform of his craft.—What a man bequeaths, after all, represents what is left after he has provided for all his wants in life. Beyond a certain figure it also represents all that is necessary to keep his family in the necessaries of life. The figure which the experience of seventy years has sanctified as being that which divides sufficiency from gentility is from £150 to £160 a year.' (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 1909, 5th Series, vol. iv, p. 505.)

[1] See *Statistical Abstract for the United Kingdom in each of the last fifteen years from 1894 to 1908. Fifty-sixth number*, 1909, No. 20. *Classification of the number of Estates and Capital Value of Estates or Portions of Estates liable to Estate Duty in each of the years ending 31st March, 1900 to 1909* (*Extricated from the Annual Report of the Inland Revenue Department*).

Kingdom. Estates exceeding £50,000 were three times as few. Estates whose value exceeded £200,000 or £250,000 were four times as few.[1] Socialist propaganda could not fail to make capital of such figures. Towards the end of 1905 a little book was published entitled *Riches and Poverty* which made a profound impression.[2] Though its figures have subsequently undergone corrections of detail[3] their substantial accuracy has never been seriously contested. The author, a Socialist named Chiozza Money, proved that almost half the total income of the United Kingdom was in the hands of a ninth of the population, more than a third in the hands of only a thirtieth part, and that over half the capital of the nation belonged to a seventieth part of the population. He concluded that the fundamental social problem was the distribution of wealth, that if the poor were to be enriched at the cost of the wealthy, a 'public maternity fund' established, popular education developed, workmen's dwellings built, and old age pensions introduced at the state expense the system of national finance must be completely transformed. He advocated the total abolition of duties on articles of consumption, with the exception of alcoholic drinks. He also advocated the ultimate nationalization of the railways and mines. But they must begin by reforming the Estate Duty and Income-Tax.[4] The highest rate of the graduated Succession Duties did not at present exceed 8 per cent. It must be raised to 16 per cent. As regards the income-tax, a distinction should be made for incomes under £1,000 between earned and unearned incomes, and above £1,000 the tax should be graduated until for incomes above £25,000 it reached a maximum of a twelfth, or

[1] Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, '*Les Fortunes en France, d'après les déclarations successorales*' (*Economiste Français Août 1903*, vol. ii, pp. 154 sqq.).

[2] L. G. Chiozza (now Sir Leo) Money, *Riches and Poverty*. The first edition appeared in October 1905 and the work reached its 10th edition in 1911. Consult also another work by the same author, *The Nation's Wealth: Will it Endure?* 1914.

[3] A. G. Pigou, *Wealth and Welfare*, 1912; Sir Josiah Stamp, *British Incomes and Property*, 'The Application of official statistics to Economic Problems, Ed. I, 1916; Arthur L. Bowley, *The Division of the Product of Industry: An Analysis of National Income; Before the War*, 1919, also *The Change in the Distribution of the National Income 1880–1913*, 1920.

[4] L. G. Chiozza Money, *Riches and Poverty*, chap. xx and xxi, pp. 277 sqq. See his evidence before the Committee of 1906, pp. 35 sqq., esp. pp. 46 sqq., also Appendix No. 12, pp. 257 sqq. Was there no danger of finally reducing the sum of national wealth and discouraging the producer? Chiozza Money did not think so and in a little book published in 1914 with the title *National Wealth, Will it Endure?* he attempted to prove that the only effect of the fiscal legislation he urged would be to change the character of production. The purchasing power of the wealthy would be diminished, that of the poor increased. The production of luxury articles would therefore decrease but the production of articles of utility would be correspondingly stimulated.

1s. 8d. in the pound. Philip Snowden, who gave evidence before the committee on behalf of the Labour party, proposed a different system, though inspired by the same spirit. The existing assessment of the income-tax should not be altered, but in addition to the ordinary tax a super-tax should be imposed on all incomes above £5,000, differentiated and graduated, which would in the case of very large incomes reach the figure of seven shillings in the pound—over a third. The reform, he pointed out, could not fail to be popular since only 10,000 taxpayers would be affected.[1]

4

Under these circumstances we can imagine the curiosity with which the public awaited the Budget of 1907. When Asquith presented it in the Commons on April 18, 1907, the House was crowded. Not only were the benches reserved for members full, but the public galleries were packed. The American Ambassador was present, and the Prince of Wales. Asquith's speech did not disappoint his audience; he was enthusiastically applauded. He began by announcing for the past financial year a surplus of £5,139,000. It was due in part to the economies which had been effected, chiefly on the army and navy, on which less had been spent than the estimates had provided for, in part to the excellent yield of taxation, partly due to the industrial boom. For the financial year 1907–1908, if the present taxes were retained, they might expect a surplus of £3,433,000. What should they do in view of this fact? Increase the sinking fund? Certainly. Reduce taxation? Not necessarily. For 'the whole territory of social reform' had still to be conquered. Large sums had been spent since 1870 on public education. It remained to provide for the aged poor by granting them pensions from the state. For this reform which would be undertaken in 1908 the necessary funds must be raised. Raise them by protective duties, said the advocates of Tariff Reform. The Government however while retaining

[1] See Philip Snowden's evidence before the Committee of 1906, pp. 1910 sqq. See especially p. 113, and Keir Hardie's similar scheme Appendix No. 5, p. 237. See further Philip Snowden, *The Socialists' Budget*, 1907 also *A Few Hints to Lloyd George. Where is the Money to come from? The Question Answered*, 1909.

the duties on sugar, tea, and coffee, for all classes must contribute to the national purse, intended to find the money without tampering with free trade, and the excellent financial position enabled them to do so without increasing the existing taxes or imposing any new ones. Asquith did indeed, in accordance with the recommendations of the committee of 1906, reform the income-tax, but only to distribute the burden better, not to increase it. Below £2,000 a distinction would be made between earned and unearned income, the tax on earned income being reduced by 3d. in the shilling, a reduction which would, according to Asquith's estimate, in an average year cost the treasury £1,250,000. The loss would be made good by a steeper graduation of the Estate Duty on estates of over £150,000 in value, and by a super-tax on estates whose value exceeded £1,000,000. Thus by a circuitous route the Government introduced the principle of a super-tax, which Philip Snowden had advocated before the committee, applying it for the moment to death duties not to income-tax. On balance there would be a surplus of £1,500,000 for the financial year 1907–8. It would be applied to the sinking fund. Next year the surplus would be used to constitute a fund with which to launch the new system of old age pensions.

The Budget of 1907 was criticized by the Tariff Reformers, who wanted the duties on sugar and tea reduced. It was a reform they had always promised the electors, to compensate for the establishment of duties on imported articles of manufacture.[1] And the Labour members made the same demand. Why not relieve in this way the working masses instead of the members of the professional classes, as was done by the 'differentiation' in the taxation of small incomes?[2] But both were heard without atten-

[1] H. of C., May 13, 14, 1907 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxiv, pp. 651 sqq. 805 sqq.).

[2] H. of C., May 13, 1907. J. N. Barnes' speech: 'The free breakfast table had again been relegated to the dim and distant future . . . in order that the man with £2,000 a year might be relieved of a contribution which would in each case have provided the old age pensions upon the scale they were asking for them. . . . This Budget was a mere pandering to the City clerk and the small gentry, who thought themselves superior persons and took their politics from the *Daily Mail*.' (ibid., vol. clxxiv, pp. 680–1). Cf. H. of C., May 14. 1907, J. R. MacDonald's speech: 'At the present time, the working classes whose incomes averaged £70 were paying something like £48,000,000 to the National Exchequer. There was not a sensible man in the House who would not say that that basis ought to be narrowed. It worked out at 2s. in the pound income-tax. If they considered the final utility of 2s. in the pound to a man whose income was anything between 15s. or £1 a week, and

tion by apathetic benches. The protectionist amendment was rejected by three hundred and seventy-six votes to a hundred and eight, and only fifty-four Labour members voted against the second reading of the Budget. It was however plain that their arguments had not been without effect when the following year Asquith presented his third Budget.

The financial position remained excellent. The financial year 1907–8 produced a surplus of £4,723,000. For the financial year 1908–9 on the basis of the existing taxation a surplus of £4,901,000 might be expected. How should it be employed? Asquith traced the outline of a comprehensive system of old age pensions to be provided exclusively by taxation which his Cabinet intended to submit to Parliament and which would cost according to official estimates £6,000,000. It would not be put into operation until the last quarter of the financial year 1908–9; and the million and a half set apart for it in 1907 would be sufficient for that quarter. A round sum of £3,500,000 remained to be found. It was roughly the equivalent of the surplus at their disposal, when a number of minor alterations had been effected in next year's taxation. If Asquith had remained faithful to the principles he had laid down the previous year he would have applied his surplus for the current financial year to the sinking fund, while employing the following year's surplus to defray the cost of the old age pensions. But he stated that in his opinion since the conclusion of the Boer War the country had done enough towards paying off the national debt and he proposed to make use of the whole or almost the whole surplus to reduce the taxes on articles of consumption. The duty on sugar was accordingly reduced by 2s. 6d. a hundredweight. It was necessary therefore in 1909 to devise some new sources of revenue unless one could reckon in perpetuity on surpluses of several millions without increase of taxation. But would it be possible to continue much longer saving on the navy estimates? And would the industrial situation always remain so satisfactory? A slump had set in since the end of 1907.

worked that out, they got an equivalent in final utility to a man whose income was £5,000 of probably something like £2,000. At the present time the income-tax upon the working classes was a tax upon life, not upon property. . . . What the Chancellor had to discover was now to remove all taxes upon life and place them upon property.' (ibid., vol. clxxiv, pp. 825–6.)

5

It is at this point in the history of British finance that Lloyd George comes upon the scene. Out of courtesy the honour of presenting the Budget which he had drawn up had been left to Asquith. But now that he was Prime Minister he was no longer Chancellor of the Exchequer and it was the task of his successor Lloyd George to defend in detail the clauses of his Budget. Lloyd George had also to introduce the Bill dealing with old age pensions, which was as it were the counterpart of the Budget, since it was to come into operation on January 1, 1909, and therefore the cost must be defrayed for one quarter by the Budget passed in the spring of 1908. In the normal course this would have been the duty of John Burns, the President of the Local Government Board. But in 1907, though promising that the Cabinet would introduce a Bill dealing with the subject in the near future, he had accompanied the promise with so many adverse criticisms of the principle it would embody, that it would probably have been a gratuitous provocation to the Labour members if the Government had put him in charge of the Bill.[1] Lloyd George supplanted him, as a year later Churchill would supplant Herbert Gladstone and Burns himself when the Trade Board Bill and the Labour Exchanges Bill were introduced. Thus the Old Age Pensions Bill, though put into shape by the permanent officials at Asquith's orders before Lloyd George became Chancellor of the Exchequer, seemed to the nation and the entire world as in a sense his work.

The question of old age pensions, when in 1908 the Government took it in hand, was ripe and more than ripe for settlement. As we have already seen it had been the subject of lively debates before the Boer War.[2] Forgotten while the war lasted, from the moment peace was restored it had been one of the most insistent demands of the working class. Every year the Trade Union Congress passed a motion demanding a national system of pensions. In 1903 a parliamentary committee accepted with a few reserva-

[1] H. of C., May 10, 1907 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxiv, pp. 523 sqq.). *The Times* in its account of the sitting put the following words into Burns' mouth: 'He hoped he would have the honour of working out the details.' But they are absent from the official report.

[2] See my *History of the English People*, vol. v, pp. 233–6.

tions the plan proposed by the committee of 1899.[1] The candidates at the election of 1906 who did not include old age pensions in their programme were very few, the Unionist candidates merely adding the reservation that for financial reasons the question could not be dealt with until the basis of taxation had been widened by the establishment of a tariff. On the morrow of its election the new House of Commons had passed unanimously a motion in favour of the scheme,[2] and in November a deputation from the trade unions urged Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith to give effect to their wishes. The Budget of 1907 promised a Bill for 1908. In September the Trade Union Congress expressed its dissatisfaction that the Bill had not been introduced in 1907 and demanded 'the payment, on January 1, 1909, of pensions of at least five shillings a week to all persons aged sixty or over'.

No further delay was possible. The publication in 1908 of a memorandum dealing with the German system of old age pensions provided by compulsory insurance and the system adopted by New Zealand of pensions provided by the State[3] was a mere formality. Everyone knew that the Government had already made its choice and that any system involving the payment of contributions by the workers was condemned in advance. A circular addressed in January to the friendly societies asking for their advice was equally an empty form. The Government had already laid its scheme before Parliament when on June 15 the replies of the friendly societies, two-thirds of which were unfavourable, were published.[4]

The system adopted by the Cabinet was not that advocated by Charles Booth and accepted by the trade unions—a pension paid by the State to all men and women without distinction who had

[1] See Report and Special Report from the Select Committee on the Aged Pensioners Bill together with the proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index, 1903.

[2] H. of C., March 14, 1906. O'Grady's motion (*Parliamentary Debates* 4th Series, vol. cliii, pp. 1330, sqq.).

[3] *Old Age Pensions (New Zealand and Germany) Return to an Order of the Honourable the House of Commons, dated 1 June, 1908, for Copy of a Memorandum of the Old Age Pensions scheme in force in New Zealand and the Scheme of Insurance against Invalidity and Old Age in force in the German Empire,* June 1908. See further for the preparation of the Bill, the official documents published in 1907 with the title *Old Age Pensions. Tables which have been prepared in connection with the question of Old Age Pensions, with a preliminary Memorandum* (the memorandum contains a useful historical sketch of the question). Cf. William Sutherland *Old Age Pensions in Theory and Practice, with some Foreign Examples,* 1907.

[4] *Circular Letter issued by the Chief Registrar to the Principal Friendly Societies with reference to the proposal Non-Contributory Scheme of Old Age Pensions, with an Abstract of their replies thereto,* 1908.

reached a certain age. It was the system in force in New Zealand, which granted pensions only to those who could prove that they did not possess an income in excess of a certain figure—that is to say, who could prove their poverty. Moreover, the Government scheme was more timid than the scheme in force in New Zealand. In New Zealand pensions were given from the age of sixty-five, in Britain they would not be given before seventy. In New Zealand to receive a pension of £18 a year a man must not have an annual income exceeding £34. In England he would receive only 5s. a week—that is to say, £13 a year—and to receive it he must not have an income exceeding £26. In New Zealand persons with an income of more than £34 were not totally excluded from the benefit of the scheme. For every pound of income above £34 they would lose a pound of the pension, so that it was only when an income of £52 was reached that a man lost all claim to a pension. The British Government gave nothing to anyone who had an income of over £26. Moreover, whereas in New Zealand an aged married couple received each a full pension, provided their total combined income including the pension did not exceed £78, the British scheme proposed to grant them a joint pension of 7s. 6d. instead of the 10s. they might have expected. In New Zealand, apart from restrictions of nationality and residence, the applicant for a pension must not be a lunatic or an habitual drunkard nor within a certain period have been sentenced to imprisonment. In all these points the English followed its Australasian model. But it added two further demands. To receive a pension the applicant must prove that his poverty was not due to the fact that he 'habitually failed to work according to his ability, opportunity, and need'. Nor was he allowed to add the pension to any Poor Law relief of which he might be in receipt. Indeed, he was excluded from the pension if he had received poor relief since January 1, 1908. As in New Zealand the Act would, to all intents and purposes, be administered by the national authorities. The pensions would be paid by the State not by the local authorities and though the examination of claims was entrusted to local committees elected by the borough, district and county councils, the central Government would have a representative, the pensions officer, on each of these.

By employing the closure, the instrument which for some years past had hastened legislation so considerably, the discussion of this

Bill of twelve clauses was rendered extremely rapid. Begun on June 13 the debates in both Houses occupied only thirteen sittings. The House of Commons was not even given time to discuss all the clauses. On July 31 the debates ended and the Old Age Pensions Act[1] became law on August 1.

But the rapidity of the debates was not due solely to the unflinching application of the closure. The Opposition put up no serious fight. It was feeble and timid. An amendment introduced by the House of Lords which restricted the operation of the statute to seven years deserves only a passing mention. It was an absurdity which the Commons swept aside. In the Commons Unionist speakers were content to reiterate, as they did on every possible occasion, their propaganda for tariff reform. The industrial crisis, then at its height, encouraged their hopes. Unless the funds were provided by a tariff, they argued, the cost of the new legislation could not be met. But they had themselves promised their constituents old age pensions. And Unionists and Liberals alike were afraid of the working-class electorate. The only amendments introduced into the Act, the effect of which was to extend its scope and therefore render it more costly, were made by the Government under pressure from private members, Unionist as well as Liberal. The clause which reduced the joint pension of a married couple was deleted. Were they to discourage matrimony? In imitation of New Zealand a 'sliding-scale' of pensions was introduced. It was unfair that the workman who saved and in return for his regular subscriptions received from his union or friendly society a pension slightly above 10s. a week—that is, £26 a year—should be penalized by the State for his economy by exclusion from the benefits of the Act. For an income of £21 a year the full pension of 5s. a week would be given, for an income below £23 12s. 6d., a pension of 4s.; below £26 5s. 0d., 3s.; below £28 17s. 6d., 2s.; below £31 10s. 0d., 1s. Finally, the clause which refused a pension to a recipient of poor relief was seriously modified in the course of debate. Only paupers lodged in the workhouses were excluded from the pension; persons in receipt of outdoor relief were entitled to the full pension, and even those in the former category were excluded only until

[1] 8 Edw. 7. Cap. 40: An Act to provide for the Old Age Pensions (*Old Age Pensions Act*, 1908). Modified in certain details by 1 & 2 Geo. 5, Cap. 16: An Act to amend the Old Age Pensions Act, 1908 (*Old Age Pensions Act*, 1911).

December 1910 unless Parliament should decide otherwise. In the interval the commission appointed to inquire into the Poor Law would have reported and might suggest a different solution. Thus, during the session of 1908 two social reforms of the first magnitude were carried by Asquith's Cabinet—the Act limiting the working day in mines, which for the first time laid down the principle of a legal limitation of hours for adult male workers, and the Old Age Pensions Act, which affirmed the principle of the right to live by recognizing the right of those too old to work to receive a pension from the community.[1]

6

But the ministerial account also showed a debit side. The House of Lords was wrecking a third Education Bill, the final attempt to reach a compromise between the conflicting claims of the Anglicans and Catholics on the one hand and of the sects on the other. It had also thrown out a Licensing Bill, which the Government had introduced to satisfy the temperance reformers and restrict the drink traffic, and a Land Valuation Bill for Scotland, which, by enabling the Government to ascertain the value of land, would have enabled it later on to tax increments of value. On these three questions the House of Lords had beaten the Government and the Government had taken the defeat lying down. The Unionist Press was jubilant. It glossed over the awkward fact that in the sphere of social reform concessions had been made to democratic opinion which more than counterbalanced these three victories. It sought to make its readers believe that the Liberal Cabinet owed its continued existence to the toleration of the Tories, who were willing to let it remain in office so long as Sir Edward Grey was at the Foreign Office and the imperialist members of the Cabinet took care that the national defences were not weakened. If the Government desired to appeal to the country on the Irish question, on the question of the denominational school, or on the question of temperance reform, let it do so by all

[1] To complete the enumeration we must mention the Act for the protection of children to which we have already referred, pp. 82-83 *n.* (8 Edw. 7, Cap. 67: An Act to consolidate and amend the Law relating to the Protection of Children and Young Persons, Reformatory and Industrial Schools, and otherwise to amend the Law with respect to Children and Young Persons [*Children Act*, 1908]).

means. The Unionists were certain of victory and it was evident that the Liberals were of the same opinion because they dared not join battle.

Was it tolerable that the Cabinet should continue to shrink from taking up the challenge thus flung in its face by the House of Lords, the Unionist party, and the Unionist Press? The more cautious Liberals, headed by Asquith, were perhaps disposed still to postpone the conflict, but the two leaders of the democratic wing of the Cabinet, Lloyd George and Churchill were impatient to take action. In September Churchill paid a long visit to Lloyd George at his country house at Criccieth.[1] They formed their plan of campaign which they partially disclosed to the public in two violent speeches, delivered, the one by Lloyd George at Liverpool on December 21, the other by Churchill at Birmingham on January 13. 'We cannot', declared Lloyd George, 'consent to accept the present humiliating conditions of legislating by the sufferance of Lord Lansdowne. This nobleman has arrogated to himself a position he has usurped—a sovereignty that no king has claimed since the ominous days of Charles I. Decrees are issued from Lansdowne House that Buckingham Palace would not dream of sending forth. We are not going to stand any longer the usurpation of King Lansdowne and his Royal consort in the Commons.' But the Liberals had the choice of the moment to deliver their attack, and Lloyd George let it be understood that it would be the presentation of the Budget. Three weeks later Churchill spoke even more plainly. 'I do not, of course, ignore the fact that the House of Lords has the power, though not, I think, the constitutional right, to bring the Government of the country to a standstill by rejecting the provision which the Commons made for the financial service of the year. That is a matter which does not rest with us, it rests with them. If they want a speedy dissolution, they know where to find one. . . . And, for my part, I should be quite content to see the battle joined as speedily as possible upon the plain simple issue of aristocratic rule against representative government, between the reversion to protection and the maintenance of free trade, between a tax on bread and a tax on—well, never mind.' Everyone was in expectation—everyone, Liberals and Unionists alike—and the more anxiously because the hand on which the young Chancellor of

[1] A. MacCallum Scott, *Winston Churchill in Peace and War*, 1916, p. 10.

the Exchequer was staking his career seemed at the opening of January 1909 particularly difficult to play. The day was past when the Liberals had only to denounce the extravagant policy of the late Government and blame the imperialism of Chamberlain and his followers for the fact that the Budget had increased by one half between 1895 and 1906 rising in ten years from £100,000,000 to £150,000,000. For two years Asquith had contrived to keep in the neighbourhood of the latter figure—but the speech he delivered when he presented his last Budget in 1908 was a warning to the taxpayer that the democratic neo-liberalism of the twentieth century had little in common with Gladstonian Liberalism, that the Cabinet did not intend to govern on the cheap and that a large increase in the amount and in the sources of expenditure was inevitable. A year later Lloyd George did but develop what his Premier had said in 1908 in more veiled language.

7

In the first place Admiral Fisher's methods had made it possible until 1908 to effect an annual reduction of the navy estimates without weakening the navy, possibly even increasing its strength. In 1908 the navy estimates for the first time had shown an increase. But it had been slight and signified merely that since every possible economy had been made, the estimates must automatically rise, even if no new expenditure were undertaken. Germany however was speeding up the construction of her navy. The Conservative Press redoubled its attacks on Fisher, and called upon the Government to recognize frankly the necessity for strengthening the fleet. The First Lord of the Admiralty, McKenna, was convinced. He was faced in the Cabinet by the opposition of Lloyd George and Churchill but he overcame it and it was agreed that he should be granted the necessary credits for a new programme of naval construction. Lloyd George took his revenge by making it clear that he would raise the money by direct and graduated taxation; in other words that he would make the wealthy pay for the new vessels. Even so, McKenna's demand was an initial difficulty which he had to face in drawing up his Budget. When the Navy Estimates were presented to Parliament in accordance with custom two months before the Budget as a whole, they

amounted to £35,124,700, an increase of almost three million over the estimates of 1908. And it must be borne in mind that, if the demands of the imperialists were to be satisfied, they would continue to increase in subsequent years. For the four Dreadnoughts it was proposed to lay down would be far from completed when four others would be laid down in accordance with their programme. From that moment the country would have to bear a double cost, the cost of finishing the former and the cost of building the latter.

In the second place, the policy of social reform had proved by the beginning of 1909 far more costly than had been expected a year earlier when the Old Age Pensions Bill was drafted. It had been calculated that 500,000 persons would be entitled to a pension, but 480,000 had established their claim by January 1,[1] and 130,000 further claims were expected. In Ireland especially, the expected number of claims had been exceeded by an incredible figure. There, it would appear, one person out of every twenty-five was seventy years of age or over, as against one out of every eighty-eight in England, either because the immigration of the youthful element of the population did in fact leave an enormous proportion of aged people, or because it was more difficult to verify the age and income of applicants or because control was intentionally more lax.[2] In any case the old age pensions would prove far more costly than had been estimated. And there was more to come. When he introduced the Old Age Pensions Bill, Lloyd George had explained that in his intention the Bill was only 'a beginning'.[3] Immediately after the close of the session he had spent three weeks in Germany, where the attention he received was a flattering proof of the important position he already occupied in the eyes of the entire Continent. He had inquired into the practical working of the social legislation which was Bismarck's gift to his country, in particular of the laws of insurance against sickness and invalidity. Would it not be possible to en-

[1] The number of pensioners in the whole of the United Kingdom amounted to 669,352 in 1910, 907,461 in 1911, 942,319 in 1912, 967,721 in 1913 and 984,131 in 1914 (*Annual Reports of the Local Government Board, Part I, Administration of the Poor Law, the Unemployed Workmen Act, and the Old Age Pensions Act*). See further for the application of the Act *Old Age Pensioners and Aged Pauperism Memorandum*, 1913.

[2] For the Administration of the Statute in Ireland see the debate in the House of Commons occasioned by the complaints of two Irish members who maintained that the Statute was applied too stringently. (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 1910, 5th Series, vol. xv, pp. 663, sqq.).

[3] H. of C., May 25, 1908 (ibid., 4th Ser. vol. clxxxix, p. 871).

graft a similar system with contributions from the workers into the system of non-contributory old age pensions now being set up in England? When he gave the Press an account of his visit he expressed his regret that nothing had yet been done in Germany to grapple with the problem of unemployment.[1] He evidently intended to grapple with it himself. At Criccieth he had discussed those questions in his conversations with Churchill. When he drew up the Budget of 1909, he was looking for sources of revenue sufficiently extensive and sufficiently elastic, to enable him to introduce, possibly in 1910, a system of insurance against all the risks incident to labour, not only the poverty of old age, but sickness, invalidity, and unemployment.

Nor was this all. He must contemplate further expenditure. Had we solved the problem of unemployment if we accepted it with resignation like a natural fatality and were content to compensate its victims? And was it a commendable method of dealing with the problem to provide even the unemployed with work whose utility was doubtful? Must not the State step in where private enterprise had failed and carry out a comprehensive plan of public works which would exploit the resources of the country? The automobile industry was making rapid strides. It had originated in France. But at present England with her 55,000 cars was proud to find herself at the head of Europe. During the previous half century the roads had been increasingly abandoned for the railways. Today the contrary process was taking place. The old road system of Great Britain required complete renovation. The existing roads were too narrow, their corners dangerous. They must be made to skirt the towns instead of traversing them. Their material was no longer suitable. And a number of entirely new roads must be made. Moreover, a Commission on afforestation appointed in 1906 had reported in January that in its opinion two million and a half acres in England and Wales were suitable for planting with trees, six million acres in Scotland, five hundred thousand in Ireland. This would involve heavy expenditure for forty years, but the benefit would then begin to be felt and meanwhile work would have been provided every year for almost forty thousand men. And once we had entered upon this path, why not go further? Why not solve the problem, so serious in Great Britain, of rural depopulation, by a number of different

[1] *The Times*, August 27, 1908.

undertakings—by creating experimental farms, improving the breed of livestock, developing agricultural education, and encouraging co-operation, providing better means of transport, splitting up large estates into small farms, draining marshes and cultivating waste land?

Such were the needs for which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to make provision and which he explained to the Commons when he introduced his Budget on April 29, 1909, in a speech of formidable, even gargantuan proportions. He spoke for four hours and a half and towards the end his strength seemed on the point of giving way. He announced the introduction at the same time as the Finance Bill of a Development Bill, which would confer upon the Government the necessary powers to embark upon those practical and costly undertakings of which we have just spoken.[1] In all, he made provision for an expenditure of £164,350,000 instead of the £154,350,000 of Asquith's Budget the year before. The increase was a large one, and expenditure would certainly continue to increase. On the one hand he was proposing expenditure which according to his own programme must rise every year and a Budget of £2,000,000, double the Budgets before the Boer War, was in sight. On the other hand when Asquith drew up his three Budgets he had benefited by an industrial and commercial boom which produced a large surplus every year. It had therefore been an easy task in 1908 to reduce taxation while increasing expenditure. The situation was now very different. Since the end of 1907 the industrial situation had steadily deteriorated and in April 1909 there were no signs of recovery. The financial year, ending on March 31, had left a deficit of £1,502,000. And it would have been even greater, if the duties on alcoholic liquors had not risen enormously. For the importers, foreseeing a large increase in the duties in the 1909 Budget, had made haste to import before the new financial year opened sufficient stock to supply the entire demand of 1909. The Treasury estimate of the £550,000,000 thus received in advance would have to be deducted from the receipts for 1909–10.

In short to defray an expenditure which exceeded £164,000,000 the Treasury had in hand £148,390,000 of receipts. That is to say,

[1] An Act finally passed: 9 Edw. 7 Cap. 47: An Act to promote the Economic Development of the United Kingdom and the Improvement of Roads therein (*Development and Road Improvement Funds Act*, 1909).

there was a deficit of almost £16,000,000. How was it to be made up? And where would the Chancellor of the Exchequer discover sources of revenue whose yield would progressively increase to keep pace with the increased expenditure foreseen in future years. Must he 'enlarge the basis of taxation' by returning to protection? That was the Unionist solution. The Liberals boasted that they could solve the problem without abandoning free trade. Their solution was the new system of taxation proposed by Lloyd George.

8

In the first place, dealing with the direct taxes Lloyd George repeated Asquith's previous declaration that the income-tax must no longer be regarded as a temporary expedient but as the centre, the 'sheet-anchor' of British finance. And he announced his intention to graduate it more steeply. For incomes below £500, an allowance of 10s. would be granted for every child below sixteen years of age, and on all incomes below £2,000 the tax would be lowered to 9d. instead of 1s. On the other hand on incomes above £3,000, it would be raised to 1s. 2d. Finally, above £5,000 incomes would be liable to that super-tax which Philip Snowden had urged upon the committee of 1906 and which the committee, without actually recommending it, had recognized to be feasible. Its rate would be 6d. in the £ for all incomes above £5,000, with a further 3d. for incomes above £6,000, to be levied on the amount of income which exceeded £3,000. This meant a rate of 1s. 6d. in the £ for an income of £9,000, 1s. 7d. for an income of £18,000. A similar reform of the death duties was effected. The lower limit of the Estate Duty remained unaltered, 1 per cent on an estate above £100 in value. Nor was the maximum rate of 15 per cent raised but it was reached quicker, by a steeper ascent, at £1,500,000 instead of £3,000,000. The legacy and succession duties were raised from 3 to 5 per cent when the legatee was a brother or sister, or the descendant of a brother or sister, and to a uniform rate of 10 per cent when the legatee was a more remote relative. The exemption from the 1 per cent duty hitherto granted to heirs in the direct line was abolished. In future such heirs and even the husband or wife of the deceased would be exempt from legacy or succession duties only when the value of the property

did not exceed £15,000. The duty on settled estates was raised from 1 to 2 per cent. To prevent evasion, gifts between the living were liable retrospectively to death duty, if they had been made less than five years before the testator's death. In the third place the stamp duties were raised very considerably on all sales and Stock Exchange transactions and in the latter case steeply graduated.

The reform of the income-tax would produce an additional £3,500,000, the reform of the succession duties an additional £2,850,000, the increase in the stamp duties an additional £650,000.

We now turn to the indirect taxes—duties on articles of consumption. Liberals and Unionists were agreed in demanding the reduction and eventual abolition of the duties on tea, cocoa, and coffee. For they increased the cost of living for the working man. Nor were they protectionist in character. But it was not an easy matter at a moment when such a large amount of additional revenue must be raised while preserving intact the system of free trade to push fiscal heroism so far as to deprive the State of a source of revenue to which it had been long accustomed. Lloyd George therefore did not reduce these duties though he refrained from raising them. But there were other indirect taxes—taxes on articles of consumption of which the zealots of a democratic Budget did not desire the reduction still less the abolition. The English Radical party supported by the leaders of Nonconformity was the party of temperance reform. It therefore wished in the moral interest of the lower classes to raise the duties on alcoholic drinks, both the customs and the excise duties. 'I am all for making it as easy as possible', Lloyd George had declared a few months earlier, 'for the people to get every commodity that is good for them. I am all for making as difficult as possible the access of the people to any commodity that injures them. That is the Liberal policy.'[1]

A 'liberal' policy? That we can hardly term it. In any case it was not a policy calculated to attract the masses. And the House of Lords felt that they were improving the prospects of the Unionist party at the polls when they opposed it. Dissatisfied with the results of the Unionist Licensing Act of 1904, the Liberal Cabinet had carried in the Commons in 1908 a new Licensing Bill, which obliged the Government at the expiration of fourteen

[1] Lloyd George. Speech at Liverpool, December 21, 1908.

years to reduce the number of licensed houses so that their number bore a fixed proportion to the population of the locality.[1] The Lords had thrown out the Bill. By the Budget of 1909 the Government would avenge its temporary humiliation at the hands of the Upper House. The licensing system was radically reformed and a general tax on licences imposed which when collected in full, for a relief was granted in certain cases, amounted to half the annual proceeds from the sale of drink. The duties on beer and spirits were raised. For these measures in the view of the Government would benefit at once the treasury and public health. They would produce, if the treasury estimates were correct, an additional revenue of £4,200,000. Smokers would help to make up the deficit by paying an increase of more than double on the tobacco duties—an additional revenue of £1,900,000; owners of motor-cars by an increase of the motor-tax and the duty on petrol would provide an additional £1,600,000, of which a fixed proportion would be spent on improving the roads. The total revenue raised from these various sources would amount to £6,700,000.

A third category of taxes remains—which we might be tempted to pass over lightly since this entire aspect of the great Budget of 1909 has proved in less than fifteen years a complete and dismal failure. We must however dwell upon it, for of all Lloyd George's proposals those we have now to relate aroused the most intense feeling at the time, kindled the anger of his opponents to its utmost pitch, and were received with the greatest enthusiasm by his supporters. When after explaining the new taxation he intended to impose upon the drink traffic, Lloyd George paused and then continued 'I now come to the question of the land' he was interrupted by a tempest of applause.

We must clearly understand in what respect his democratic finance differed from the doctrine of an orthodox Socialist. The year before, Philip Snowden had harassed the Government with speeches biting as *aqua fortis* in which he denounced its financial and social policy. Neither the Budget of 1908 nor the Old Age Pensions Act met with his approval. Neither answered his definition of good legislation, legislation which made 'the rich poorer

[1] For the details of this extremely complicated Bill see H. of C., February 27, 1908, Asquith's speech. (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxx, pp. 73 sqq.). For the effect, evidently slight, of the Act of 1904, see *Statistics as to the Operation and Administration of the Laws relating to the sale of Intoxicating Liquor in England and Wales for the year 1907.*

and the poor richer'.[1] The Budget of 1909 might well constitute, if not a measure of satisfaction to Snowden, for he was one of those men whom you can never satisfy, at least the first effort to satisfy him. It did not however amount to a declaration of war upon the rich, unqualified, and indiscriminate. It was indeed war against the extremely wealthy on whom it imposed the new burdens of the heavy supertax on income and the increase in the succession duties. Lloyd George explained however that he did not intend in the strict sense to supertax them—that is, to make them pay more than their fair proportion of the taxes but only to make them pay sufficient to satisfy the principle of genuine equality. It was but equitable that the wealthy should pay a premium for the security the State guaranteed their wealth. It was only fair that they should contribute a large share to the social expenditure of every kind undertaken by the democratic State. For a well-educated and well-fed populace was a more solid foundation on which to build the national wealth than a semi-barbarous proletariat. It was against the monopoly of the landowners that he summoned the rest of the nation to revolt. In the large towns and in the mining areas the landlord became wealthy without any action on his part at the cost of the workers and as a result of their work. In the mines the capitalist risked his capital, the miner only his life. The landlord was certain to gain. In the towns, all who needed land for factory, shop, or lodging, were his victims. A little later Lloyd George attempted to arouse the sympathy of a proletarian audience for the lot of the proprietor of one of the great fashionable West End shops exploited by his landlord, the Duke of Westminster.[2]

This denunciation of the great landed estates was no novelty. It was a tradition which dated from the birth of modern Radicalism. Ricardo had worked out a theory of ground rent according to which it increased automatically without any expenditure of labour whereas wages always remained at the same level, and

[1] H. of C., May 25, 1908: 'The condition of the people remained practically the same . . . the old age pensions scheme would make no great change in the distribution of wealth. No rich man was going to be a penny poorer than he was to-day by this scheme' (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxxix, p. 828). May 4, 1909: 'The extreme Socialist School . . . are charged with wanting to make the rich poorer and the poor richer. I have never denied that that is my purpose. My object is to make the rich poorer and the poor richer, because there is no other way under heaven by which you can make the poor better off except by making somebody poorer than they are.' (Ibid., 5th Ser., vol. iv, p. 1073.)

[2] Speech at Limehouse, July 31, 1909.

profits continually diminished. There was therefore no reason, he concluded, why the capitalist and the worker, comrades in misfortune, should not combine to tax the landlord for the benefit of society as a whole. His disciple, James Mill, had pushed the suggestion a little further, John Stuart Mill further still and the American, Henry George, had carried it to the furthest possible point. He wished to introduce a single tax on land alone equal to the value of landed property. It amounted to expropriation. Taxation of the landlord would thus provide a radical solution of the social problem by liberating the capitalist and the labourer at the same time. A quarter of a century earlier his formula had made a great stir in England. Lloyd George was beginning to apply it by introducing some new taxes. The first, the unearned increment value tax, was a tax of 20 per cent on an increase in the value of land, to be ascertained every time it changed hands. The second, the determination of lease tax, was a tax of 10 per cent on the increased value of property let out on lease, calculated at the renewal of the lease. The third, the undeveloped land and ungotten minerals tax, was roughly a tax of a halfpenny in the pound on the value of land which its owner did not cultivate or subsoil whose mineral wealth he did not exploit. These taxes, particularly the last, would not be a serious burden. And they would be further reduced by the fact that they could not produce their full return until a general valuation of the land and a revision of the survey had been carried out which would itself cost money. The treasury expected these taxes to bring in £500,000 during the year 1909–10. But Lloyd George probably regarded them as a mere beginning. They could be increased later until, in the course of time, they produced a revolutionary effect.

The additional receipts would amount therefore to a total of £14,200,000 to meet an expected deficit of £15,772,000. By taking £3,000,000 from the sinking fund the Budget would be balanced with a surplus of almost £500,000. A new era was opening in the history of British finance. It was admitted that expenditure must inevitably increase, constantly and normally. But the Government refused to meet it by adopting tariff reform. New land taxes were instituted which might later become an important source of revenue. Moreover they came under the heading of direct taxation which, together with the taxes on alcoholic liquors, remained as in the days of Gladstone, the foun-

dation of the fiscal system. We have seen that at the end of the nineteenth century the moment was at hand when the yield of direct and indirect taxation would be equal. Now the balance inclined to the side of direct taxation.[1]

9

Lloyd George had expected the Budget to exasperate his opponents. Stunned for the moment as by the blow of a club, they soon recovered and a protracted and bitter struggle began. From April 30 until the beginning of November, Parliament was in almost continuous session. Other measures were indeed passed during this session of 1909—an Act which granted the native Indians genuine representation in the 'councils' of British India, an Act conferring an autonomous constitution upon a united South Africa, the two Statutes which set up the Trade Boards and Labour Exchanges, an Act extending the powers of the local authorities as regards the housing of workmen and town planning[2] and a Land Act for Ireland. But the Budget alone was the subject of embittered warfare between the parties. The Opposition secured only very inconsiderable amendments whose details it would be tedious to describe, the substitution for the tax on ungotten minerals of a tax on royalties (the change gave the treasury an additional revenue of £175,000), a reduction of the new duties on licences and stamps, and a larger reduction of the sinking fund, £3,500,000 instead of £3,000,000. But in spite of such modifications of detail it was Lloyd George's Budget which was passed in November. It could not well have been otherwise. The Government's majority in the Commons, though reduced by a number of unfavourable by-elections, was still too strong to

[1] In 1900–1 the direct taxation represented 49.4 per cent of the total revenue. In 1901–2 and 1902–3 the war Budgets made it increase faster than the indirect. It represented respectively 52.5 and 52.4 per cent of the total revenue. During the subsequent years it fell below 50 per cent, but that proportion was definitely exceeded in 1905–6: 50.3 per cent. In 1906–7 the proportion was 51.4, in 1907–8, 51.1, in 1908–9, 52.6 per cent. Lloyd George's great Budget brought it to 56.4 in 1909–10, and 1910–11. In 1911–12 it was 57.3, in 1912–13, 57.6. (Bernard Mallet, *British Budgets 1887–1913*, p. 493.)

[2] 9 Edw. 7, Cap. 44: An Act to amend the Law relating to the Housing of the Working Classes, to provide for the making of Town Planning Schemes, and to make further provision with respect to the appointment and duties of County Medical Officers of Health and to provide for the establishment of Public Health and Housing Committees of County Councils, 1909.

be destroyed even by a combined revolt of all the Irish and Labour members. And there was no reason to fear such a combination. The Labour members liked a Budget in which they saw the first fruits of a Socialist legislation. The Irish did not like it. On the question of Protection they shared the views of the Unionist, not the Liberal party. They were also very hostile to the clauses of the Budget which imposed crushing duties on alcoholic drinks. They voted against the Bill on the second reading. They abstained from voting when on November 4 the Bill passed its third reading. But it was passed by 379 votes to 149. They knew that neither their opposition nor their more cautious absention could endanger the Bill. Neither did they wish to endanger it. Whatever they might think of the measure itself, they understood what an excellent weapon it was against the House of Lords. And this was a consideration which in their eyes eclipsed all others.

In fact, it is not upon these impassioned debates, noisy scenes, and applications of the closure with the protests to which they gave birth that we must fix our eyes. It was in the country that the real battle was fought out. A league was formed against the Budget and an opposition league to defend it. Campaigns of oratory were conducted on a large scale. The offensive was launched by the Unionists. But these meetings of business men with a great landowner often in the chair were not calculated to frighten the Government. Their organizers were playing into Lloyd George's hands by proving to the entire country that the Liberals were faced by a combination whose object was to defend, not the interests of the nation, but those of a particular class. The Government replied and with slashing onslaughts. Lloyd George and Churchill, particularly the former, carried the war into the enemy's camp. Lloyd George began by attacking Lord Rothschild, who imprudently made himself a prominent figure as a leader of the campaign. 'There are countries where they have made it perfectly clear that they are not going to have their policy dictated merely by great financiers, and if this sort of thing goes on this country will join the rest of them.'[1] But soon, faithful to his tactics, he portrayed the entire nation, artisans, men of business, manufacturers, merchants, and engineers in alliance against the intolerable yoke of the great landowners, the 'Dukes' as he became accustomed to call them. 'The ownership of land

[1] Speech at Holborn Restaurant, June 24, 1909.

is not merely an enjoyment, it is a stewardship. It has been reckoned as such in the past, and if the landowners cease to discharge these functions, the time will come to reconsider the conditions under which land is held in this country. No country, however rich, can permanently afford to have quartered upon its revenue a class which declined to do the duty which it was called upon to perform.'[1] He was accused of driving capital from the country by the panic his Budget had provoked. A ridiculous lie! On the contrary, after the introduction of the Budget the position of trade was recovering from long months of depression. Every month the imports and exports were increasing. 'Only one stock has gone down badly; there has been a great slump in Dukes.'[2] 'A fully-equipped Duke', Lloyd George calculated, 'costs as much to keep up as two Dreadnoughts; and Dukes are just as great a terror and they last longer.'[3] Why this harping on the Dukes? It was not simply because the Duke of Westminster, the Duke of Rutland, and the Duke of Northumberland were taking part in too many public meetings. It was also because the Dukes were the heads of the peerage; and the entire House of Lords was the target of these insults, each one a challenge. If the Lords dared to throw out the Budget they would make a revolution and the people would soon take that revolution out of their hands. Their own folly had raised the question: 'Should five hundred men, ordinary men, chosen accidentally from among the unemployed, override the judgment—the deliberate judgment—of millions of people who are engaged in the industry which makes the wealth of the country?'[4]

We may well believe that at the beginning neither the Liberal nor the Unionist leaders desired to press the issue to such extremities. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey and Lord Lansdowne and Arthur Balfour were prudent men inclined to moderate courses. But a large number of their followers in both camps were of more warlike stuff. On the side of the Government were Lloyd George and Churchill. On the side of the Opposition was the host of Tariff Reformers: Joseph Chamberlain, crippled and invisible, penned from his retirement at Highbury a summons to resistance. The entire Unionist Press re-echoed his appeal. *The Times* alone

[1] Speech at Limehouse, July 30, 1909.
[2] Speech at Newcastle-on-Tyne, October 9, 1909.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

for a time preached caution;[1] and there was even a moment when the great demagogue who directed both *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* seemed shaken by the force of Lloyd George's fervid eloquence and showed a disposition to support his policy.[2] Lord Rosebery attempted his favourite role of mediator.[3] It was too late. Already Lord Lansdowne—no doubt with reluctance—had bowed to the will of his party[4] and Balfour would shortly be persuaded to commit himself irrevocably.[5] The alternative he declared was the Budget or tariff reform. It was for the people to choose. And it was for the Lords to invite their choice by throwing out the Budget.

10

In what terms was the issue stated? The Liberals claimed that it was a question of constitutional law. The constitution, they argued, gave the House of Lords no right to reject the Budget. But England does not possess a written constitution. On what then was this alleged limitation of the Lords' prerogative founded? On a number of 'resolutions' passed by the Lower House in which the House of Lords had acquiesced and to which custom had accordingly given the force of law. Two of these passed under the Stuarts, the former in 1671, the second in 1678 declared in substance that it was the right of the Commons to initiate legislation granting supplies to the Crown, and that the Lords had no right to amend such Bills.

If, however, these resolutions denied that the House of Lords had the right to amend a Money Bill sent up from the Commons, they did not deny that the Lords had the right to reject it *en bloc*. On the contrary, a resolution passed by the Commons in 1689—

[1] *The Times*, July 5, September 11, 1909.
[2] *The Times*, August 4, *Daily Mail*, August 5, 1909.
[3] Speech at Glasgow, September 10, 1909.
[4] Speech at Bowood, August 7, 1909. With reluctance we have remarked. See the entry in Sir Almeric Fitzroy's diary for November 16, 1909: 'I sat next to him at luncheon at the Travellers' and thought him nervous and ill at ease; further, from some remarks he let fall about the Irish Land Bill and the Housing Bill, I could not fail to gather that he entertained grave misgivings upon the course he was about to take. There can be no doubt, in fact, that it has been forced upon him by the clamour of the Unionist Press, and the apprehensions of Tariff Reformers. He has not had a free choice in the matter; Whig scruples have been ruthlessly sacrificed to Tory passion and the petulance of wire-pulling demagogy.' (*Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 386.)
[5] Speech at Birmingham, September 24, 1909.

that is, on the morrow of the Revolution which had overthrown the Stuarts, expressly recognized their right to do so. The House of Lords had attempted to amend a Money Bill, the House of Commons had refused to give way. A conference had been held between representatives of the two Houses at which the representatives of the Commons declared that the Lords when presented with a Money Bill had only one option, 'that of adopting it or of rejecting it wholly, without alteration or amendment, if it might be to the relief of the taxpayers'. Subsequently the Lords had made frequent use of this right to reject Money Bills. Often, both before and after the Reform Bill of 1832, they had thrown out Money Bills sent up by the Commons, imposing customs or excise duties. But the day came when the Lords had the imprudence to carry too far the exercise of a right tolerated by the House of Commons and suffered or seemed to suffer a further curtailment of their prerogative.

Until that date it had been the custom to include in the Budget only those 'annual' taxes renewed every year by the Commons. When to balance the Budget it was necessary to alter a permanent tax, a special Act had to be passed, distinct from the annual Budget. This happened in 1860. The Government passed through the Commons a Bill abolishing the duties on paper. The Lords threw it out. This amounted undoubtedly to amending the Budget though it was by an indirect method. The Liberals protested vehemently. They denied that the Lords, because they were permitted to reject Money Bills which did not directly affect the composition of the Budget, could claim the right to interfere in any way whatsoever with the latter. The Liberal Government, postponing for a year the alteration of the excise duties for which it had asked, adopted the following year the novel procedure of incorporating into the Finance Bill every tax without exception and introduced into this complete Finance Bill the abolition of the excise duties on paper. The Lords were therefore faced with a dilemma. They must either adopt the daring course of rejecting the Budget as a whole, which was the only method by which they could protest against the abolition of the duties on paper. Or they must accept the entire Budget including the abolition of the duties on paper. In the former case the Government would appeal to the country and obtain its support against the Lords. In the latter case the conclusion would be drawn that the Lords re-

nounced not only the right to amend the Budget but the right to reject it.

Actually, the Upper House never displayed subsequently any disposition to reject the Budget sent up by the Commons at the close of the session, not even in 1894 when the Liberal Cabinet effected by means of the Budget a reform of the succession duties nothing short of revolutionary and which the Government had decided to incorporate in the Budget for the very purpose of overcoming the opposition which the Lords offered to all their measures of reform. In consequence, it was taken for granted that in the sphere of finance the British constitution was not bicameral but unicameral. It became the custom to levy the new taxes set down in the Budget from the day when they were passed by the Commons without waiting for the assent of the Lords. Twice in 1907 and again in 1908 Arthur Balfour had expressly recognized that the House of Commons alone possessed authority in the sphere of finance.[1] Was the doctrine therefore beyond question? To Balfour's imprudent declarations, which he now found extremely embarrassing, the Unionists could oppose an equally imprudent declaration to the contrary made by Lord Spencer in 1904 when he was leader of the Liberal party in the House of Lords.[2] The fact of the matter was that for more than two centuries the House of Lords had never thrown out a Budget, and only circumstances of exceptional gravity could justify the breach of a custom so firmly established. It was a question of

[1] H. of C., June 24, 1907: '. . . We all know that the power of the House of Lords thus limited, and rightly limited as I think, in the sphere of legislation and administration, is still further limited by the fact that it cannot touch those Money Bills, which if it could deal with, no doubt it could bring the whole executive machinery of the country to a standstill.' (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxvi, pp. 929–30.) Speech at Dumfries, October 6, 1908: 'It is the House of Commons, not the House of Lords which settles uncontrolled our financial system.'

[2] H. of L., July 29, 1904: 'We all know that we in this House cannot amend a Money Bill, but we have a perfect right to discuss it and a full right to throw it out if we so will.' (*Parl. Deb.* 4th Ser., vol. cxxxix, p. 5.) When on July 20, 1908, the Old Age Pension Bill was read a second time in the Lords and Lord Wemyss had proposed to wait, before discussing it, for the report of the Commission which was inquiring into the Poor Law, Lord Rosebery pointed out that the Bill was a Money Bill, adopted almost unanimously by the other House and that an amendment at this point would amount to rejecting it. But if he advised against rejection, he did not regard rejection as unconstitutional, as is proved by the fact that in a speech delivered a week later he said that 'if he were to move the amendment which would commend itself most to his mind it would be to refer the Bill to the country at large. It was no part of the programme of the Government in the last election'. Lord Lansdowne also advised against the rejection of a Bill 'which was really a financial Bill, and which had been supported by colossal majorities in the other House'. He concluded that 'the wisest course' (he did not say the only constitutional course) was

expediency rather than of constitutional law, and weighty arguments could be pleaded in support of the more daring course.

For conditions had changed since the custom first arose. Could it be maintained that the position occupied by the House of Commons at the beginning of the twentieth century was the same as it had been in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when it asserted the right to exercise an entire and unfettered control over a grant of supplies which the Sovereign might employ against itself and the country which it claimed to represent in its dealings with the Crown? The real sovereign, *de facto* if not *de jure*, was no longer the King but the electorate and the intention of the Commons when it asserted its financial omnipotence was to prevent any restriction being placed upon the revenue it desired to exact from the taxpayer to distribute it lavishly among the majority of the nation. And, on the other hand, was it possible any longer to differentiate among Money Bills between those which while having a financial aspect were concerned with objects outside the sphere of finance[1] and those—for example, the annual Budget—whose sole object was to provide the Government with the revenue it required for national purposes? Budgets whose authors inquired not 'how much money each taxpayer

to proceed to the discussion of the clauses. He was content to express the hope that 'the Government would not too severely press the privilege of the House of Commons'. What followed was this. When Lord Cromer brought forward an amendment restricting the operation of the Act to seven years, the Lord Chancellor observed that the amendment bore a financial character, and therefore violated the privileges of the Commons. In spite of this the amendment was carried, but when the Bill was returned to the Commons the Speaker pronounced it inadmissible for the same reason. The House of Lords finally submitted though not without protests. (H. of L., July 20, 1908; *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxcii, pp. 1379 sqq.; July 28, 1908, ibid., vol. cxciii, pp. 1073, 1077–8. H. of C., July 31, 1908, ibid., p. 1970.) We must however bear in mind that if the doctrine that Money Bills were unalterable was pushed very far, the Lords' right to reject them was not contested. See further H. of L., March 25, 1908, Lord Loreburn's speech (*Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., vol. clxxxvi, p. 1382) also the debate between Lord Loreburn and Lord Salisbury on the subject of this declaration. H. of L., May 24, 1909 (*Parl. Deb.*, Lords, 1909, 5th Ser., vol. iv, pp. 929 sqq.).

[1] See on this point the admissions made by John Morley himself, H. of L., November 29, 1909. 'The bare legal right (to reject the Budget) has not been denied. Some, no doubt, and I do not know that I would quarrel with them, would argue that the bare legal right may, on certain occasions, be appropriately transformed into a moral duty. Yes, but [*sic*] I can imagine a state of things—I can imagine it without difficulty—which would justify the transformation of a legal right into aspects of moral duty by reason of the wildest proposals of a demented House of Commons.' (*Parl Deb.*, Lords 1909, 5th Ser., vol. iv, pp. 1140–1.) The opposition speakers exhumed declarations made by Gladstone during the conflict of 1860 which admitted the Lords' right to 'amend the Budget if provisions not strictly financial were illegitimately embodied in it'. July 5, 1860, May 16, 1861 (*Parl. Deb.*, 3rd Ser., vol. clix, pp. 1433–4; vol. clxii, p. 2131).

had got, but how he had got it' and expressly proposed to 'make the rich poorer and the poor richer' were not Money Bills in the strict sense, but social legislation of the most far-reaching character whose object was to redistribute private wealth. The House of Lords might therefore with perfect fidelity to the logic of the constitution consider itself entitled to take the opportunity of declaring that under these novel circumstances, though it could not revive the claim to amend the Budget, since it had acquiesced in the formal resolutions of the Commons which deprived it of that prerogative, it was at least free to reject it as a whole, thereby making use of a right recognized by a resolution no less formal and which had not been revoked even in 1861.

We must therefore consider the House of Lords as placed, when presented with the Budget of 1909, in the same position in which it had been placed when presented with numerous Bills sent up to it by the Lower House since the Election of 1906. It had acted wisely—that is to say, it had not damaged its position—when it rejected the Education Bill of 1906 and the Licensing Bill of 1908. On the other hand, it had shown equal wisdom in accepting the Trade Disputes Bill of 1906 and the numerous measures of social reform which had followed it, the Workmen's Insurance Bill, the Eight-Hours' Day Bill, the Trade Boards Bill, and the Labour Exchanges Bill. Would it not be prudent to adopt the same attitude towards the far-reaching measure of social reform which called itself the Budget of 1909? If it threw out the Bill, a chamber in which the influence of the great landowners was regarded as predominant would be accused of doing so, to defend not the national welfare but the pecuniary interests of an order, a particular class. It would incur the responsibility of plunging the public finance into chaos, nine months after the financial year had opened. It would also expose itself to the charge, plausible in a country where the constitution was entirely customary, of attempting an almost revolutionary *coup d'état*. But, on the other hand, Lloyd George by his violent diatribes was doing his utmost to drive the House of Lords into a desperate course. He wished apparently to make it plain to the entire world that if the House of Lords passed the Budget it would accept a severe defeat, a marked humiliation. He was—deliberately perhaps—forcing the Lords to take an heroic decision. It was taken. A motion by Lord Lansdowne which declared that the House of Lords 'was not

bound to give its adherence to the Finance Bill so long as it had not been submitted to the judgment of the country' was carried on November 30 after six days of serious and solid debate, by 350 to 75 votes. The House of Commons replied on December 2 with a declaration, carried by 349 votes to 134 that the action of the Upper House amounted to 'a breach of the Constitution and a usurpation of the rights of the Commons'.

CHAPTER II

The Constitutional Crisis and the House of Lords

I FROM THE DISSOLUTION OF 1909 TO THE DEATH OF EDWARD VII

1

THE course of events had caused King Edward considerable anxiety. By no means well disposed to the Budget of 1909 he was no less dissatisfied with the uncompromising attitude of the Unionists. By thus meeting intransigence with intransigence they were surely playing the Radicals' game? He was believed to have inspired Lord Rosebery's speech in September in which he had pressed caution upon the Lords.[1] It was known that in the beginning of October he had invited the Prime Minister to Balmoral and asked his permission to have an interview with the Unionist leaders to urge a compromise upon them. Asquith had given his consent, either because he was in favour of a compromise, or, knowing that the Unionists had already made up their mind to refuse an amicable solution, he wanted to make them shoulder the entire responsibility for the coming struggle. And in fact when the King on his return to London met Lord Lansdowne and Arthur Balfour, he could effect nothing.[2] When therefore after the vote of the Lords, Asquith asked him to dissolve Parliament, he was no doubt more annoyed with the Conservative statesmen who had hurt his vanity by refusing to let him play the part of peacemaker than he was with the authors of the objectionable Budget. He therefore made no objection to declaring Parliament dissolved on December 15. The General Election would follow in January. What under the circumstances was the choice before the voters? A Unionist victory would mean the rejection of the Budget. It would also mean what admittedly was the only alternative method of providing for the enormous in-

[1] Comte d'Haussonville '*Les élections et la situation politique en Angleterre*' (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, February 1, 1911, vol. ccccxxxvii, p. 560).

[2] Sir William Angus. Speech at Newcastle-on-Tyne, October 9, 1907. Sir Almeric Fitzroy, *Memoirs*, October 11, 1907 (vol. i, pp. 384–5). Sir Sidney Lee, *King Edward VII* (vol. ii, pp. 667–8).

crease in the National expenditure, abandoning the tradition of free trade and applying the principles preached by the Tariff Reformers. A victory of the Liberals with their Labour and Irish allies would mean the approval of the Budget by the electorate. But it would involve more than this. For it would be necessary to prevent by an express enactment any further encroachment by the House of Lords upon the prerogative of the new House of Commons. 'We shall not assume office,' declared Asquith at a public meeting held on December 10, 'and we shall not hold office, unless we can secure the safeguards which experience shows to be necessary for the legislative utility and honour of the party of progress.'

If the Unionists expected a full swing of the pendulum, a complete reversal of the popular verdict and a striking revenge for their defeat in 1906, they were disappointed.[1] What actually occurred was a return after the abnormal Election of 1906 to a normal situation. But the Conservatives did not experience once more the triumphant days of 1895 and 1900. They reconquered the south-eastern counties, those Home Counties which they had always regarded as their province and which they had lost only by accident in 1906. It was a gain of 44 seats. But it was their sole victory. Their gains in London barely sufficed to give them a slight majority. The result was the same in the eastern, midland, and western counties. The industrial north remained faithful to the Liberals. Lancashire, which from hatred of Home Rule had gone over to the Conservatives in 1895 and 1900, had apparently, in its fear of Chamberlain's protection, returned permanently to its old allegiance. In these northern districts there was only a slight decline in the number of Liberal seats as compared with 1906: more than four-fifths were won by candidates supporting the Government. In Scotland the Liberal party, whose domination had been threatened at the close of the nineteenth century, was once more sovereign. With the exception of a solitary seat all the Welsh constituencies returned Liberal candidates. As always, Ireland returned a little over eighty Nationalists, inflexible enemies of the House of Lords. On balance, the Opposition secured only 273 seats as against 397 held by the supporters of the Govern-

[1] For the forecasts—very vague and often markedly divergent—of the forthcoming election see Sir Almeric Fitzroy, December 11, 14, 1909; January 4, 19, 1910 (*Memoirs*, vol. i, pp. 390, 391, 392).

ment—that is to say, the Government had a majority—possibly the more solid because it was smaller—of 124.[1]

But the Conservatives found consolation by analysing the composition of this majority. In England itself they had obtained a majority of seats, 239 as against 191 held by the Liberals, 34 by the Labour party and 1 by the Nationalists, that is to say a total of no more than 226 members on the Government side of the House. It was upon Scotland, Wales, and Separatist Ireland—that is to say, upon all those portions of the United Kingdom which were not English, that the Government's majority rested. A somewhat similar position had resulted from the General Election of 1835, two years after the overwhelming Whig triumph of 1833 which might be compared with the Liberal victory in 1906, and six years later the Conservatives had secured a decided majority in the Commons. And the situation presented another feature even more serious for the Government. In the new House the Unionists gained 100 seats, the Liberals lost 100, and in consequence the numbers of both parties were equal. The Government therefore had to depend for its majority upon two parties distinct from the Liberal though in alliance with it, the Labour party with roughly 40 seats and the Nationalists with some 80 seats. If the Nationalists were to abstain from voting the Government's majority would be reduced from 125 to 43. If they voted with the Unionists, its majority would be transformed into a minority—that is to say, in Parliament the Nationalists were masters of the situation.

It was a paradoxical state of affairs. The Irish, for the reason we have explained, disliked the Budget. It was only very reluctantly that they accepted it, for tactical reasons. It was their present to their friends the English Radicals, for which they in return would subsequently give them the Home Rule they desired and in the meanwhile would take the necessary steps to prevent the House of Lords from withholding it. They lost no time in pressing their demands home. The most urgent desire of the Government was to settle the question of the Budget, which had been hung up for months and on which it would seem the election had been held. They would then proceed to deal with the House of Lords. But it was the Budget which gave the Irish their hold over

[1] For a good analysis of the result of this Election of January 1910 see an article by Captain E. N. Mozley 'The Political Heptarchy. An Analysis of seven General Elections.' (*Contemporary Review*, April 1910; vol. xcvii, pp. 400 sqq.).

the Government. Once the Budget had been safely passed, it would have a freedom of action which the Irish did not desire it to possess. John Redmond indeed, a revolutionary well tamed by parliamentary methods, might possibly have proved more accommodating; but he felt his footsteps dogged not only by his own party but worse still by those dissidents who in Ireland were on the watch for the least sign of weakness on the part of the official Nationalists. The Irish therefore successfully demanded that before dealing with the Budget, Parliament should pronounce at least in principle on the question of the House of Lords. What form exactly did that question take? And in the first place what was this Chamber whose prerogatives or composition the Government proclaimed its intention to alter?

2

The House of Lords, we need hardly point out, did not represent, as did for example the Prussian *Herrenhaus*, a closed aristocracy, a noble caste. Nor is the difference sufficiently denoted by the fact that out of the British peerages of 1910 only thirty-two dated from the seventeenth century, eleven from the sixteenth, four from the fifteenth, five from the fourteenth and two from the thirteenth. For in every country in the world hereditary aristocracies speedily decay by the extinction of families. The distinctive feature of the British peerage was that the old families were swamped by an ever increasing flood of new peers. Throughout the greater part of the eighteenth century the increase had been slow, the number of peers rising only from 153 at the Revolution of 1688 to 174 at the accession of George III. But we have seen how for political reasons George III and above all his Minister, William Pitt, had lavished new peerages.[1] George IV had followed their example. At his death just before the crisis of the Reform Bill the number of peers had risen to 326. Once that crisis had passed a long halt followed, a period which witnessed no new constitutional developments. From 1837, the year of Queen Victoria's accession, to 1865, the year of Palmerston's death, the number of peers remained practically stationary. From

[1] See my *History of the English People*, vol. i, pp. 193–6.

385 it had risen to 400. It was after the latter date and especially after the passing of the Reform Bill of 1867, that creations of peers became more frequent as the constitution became more democratic. At the end of 1909 there were 544 hereditary peers.[1] At this rate within a few years, the House of Lords would have a larger membership than the Commons.

From what sources were these new peers drawn? Large numbers of them had been members of the Lower House who already belonged to the old gentle families and whose promotion to the peerage did not alter fundamentally its social composition. There were soldiers and sailors rewarded for distinguished service to their country—for example, Lord Wolseley, Lord Roberts, and Lord Kitchener. It is a curious fact that since for many years there had been no naval warfare, the navy in 1909 was practically unrepresented in the Lords. There were men who filled or had filled important administrative posts, ambassadors or Colonial governors. There was a small number of lawyers whose presence was indispensable when the House sat as a court of justice. On these occasions the other peers kept away and a few lawyers composed the entire assembly. Intellectual merit received little recognition. In 1909 there was not a single representative of literature, art or science. Lord Leighton, Lord Lister, and Lord Kelvin were dead and only the name of Lord Tennyson recalled the fact that his celebrated father had been a peer. But the really striking phenomenon was the invasion of the House of Lords, more marked every decade, by representatives of the business world, bankers, industrial magnates, and proprietors of newspapers.[2] We might

[1] To complete the membership of the House of Lords we must add 26 archbishops and bishops, 44 representative peers of Scotland and Ireland and 5 or 6 life peers. They bring the total to a figure exceeding 600. We must remember that the titles of Duke and Marquis had kept all their old value. (There were 22 dukes in 1909 in place of 20 in 1805, and 21 in 1837; 23 marquises in place of 19 in 1865 and in 1837.) It was the titles of Viscount and Baron which had been bestowed so lavishly. There were 42 Viscounts in 1909 as against 21 in 1865, 18 in 1837; 334 Barons as against 207 in 1865, 193 in 1837. (For all these figures see *Vacher's Parliamentary Companion* (from 1833).)

[2] For this invasion of the Peerage by business magnates see Labouchere's complaint in the House of Commons as early as 1888 (H. of C., March 9, 1888. *Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. cccxxiii, pp. 763 sqq.). Lord Salisbury's Government (1895–1902) created 50 peers, among them 6 business men (Baron de Worms created Baron Pirbright, the banker; H. H. Gibbs created Baron Aldenham, the Canadian railway director; Donald Alexander Smith created Baron Strathcona, the banker; Sir John Lubbock created Baron Avebury, the journalist; Sir Algernon Borthwick, director of the *Morning Post*, created Baron Glenesk; William Louis Jackson, leather and skin merchant later a railway director, created Baron Allerton. Balfour's Government (1902–1905) created 18 peers, among them 5 business men, a banker M. Biddulph created Baron Biddulph; an armament manufac-

have expected Conservative protests against such a debasement of the governing aristocracy, especially when these creations were the work of a Liberal Cabinet. And it was surely the strict duty of the Radical party to denounce this transformation of the Upper House into a frank plutocracy. But protests were in fact very few. A speech by Ramsay MacDonald[1] found little echo in the Press. From the opposite quarter the *Saturday Review* denounced in December 1905 the double elevation to the peerage of the eminent Jewish banker Herbert Stern and the popular journalist Sir Alfred Harmsworth.[2] But the Toryism of the *Saturday Review* was of an eccentric quality. Lord Northcliffe's peerage was calculated to please journalists of every camp. In 1906 King Edward revolted against the excessive number of peerages created by the new Liberal Cabinet, sixteen in six months not counting the Lord Chancellor's peerage, and attempted to veto the elevation to the peerage of Pirrie, the great Belfast shipbuilder. But Campbell-Bannerman held his ground. Three years later, Asquith made Pirrie a knight of Saint Patrick, and it was the turn of the nobility to revolt. The other knights of the order struck and refused to take part in the ceremony of inauguration which had therefore to

turer, W. H. A. F. Watson Armstrong, created Baron Armstrong; an ironmaster, Sir A. J. Forbes-Leith, created Baron Leith of Fyvie; the great Jewish financial magnate, Herbert Stern, created Baron Michelham (he had been made a baronet six months earlier), and the banker, E. B. Faber, created Baron Faber; also the journalists Edwin Levy-Lawson, director of the *Daily Telegraph*, created Baron Burnham, and Sir Alfred Harmsworth, director of the *Daily Mail*, created Baron Northcliffe. Campbell-Bannerman's Government was responsible for 21 new peerages, of which eight were given to business men. James Joicey, mine owner and newspaper proprietor, was created Baron Joicey. W. A. Wills, tobacco magnate, was created Baron Winterstoke; the Belfast shipbuilder W. J. Pirrie, created Baron Pirrie; J. J. Jenkins, Chairman of the Swansea Metal Exchange, created Baron Glantawe; G. Armitstead, a merchant, created Baron Armitstead; James Kitson, an ironmaster, created Baron Airedale; the Jewish banker, Montagu Samuel Montagu, created Baron Swaythling and Alexander Peckover, also a banker, created Baron Peckover.

[1] Speech at Longton, June 27, 1910: 'The seven new peers created by the Liberal Government were an awful warning of what would happen if they voted for the reform of the House of Lords. Let them look at the list. If he was going to have an aristocrat, he wanted a genuine aristocrat and not merely a plutocrat. If they were to have men of title holding even the limited power in the Constitution which the veto resolutions gave, he wanted men whom he could respect and not men who had bought their way into the Upper Chamber by liberally subscribing to party funds. . . . The Labour Party would not allow the new aristocracy to subvert the will of the people. . . .'

[2] *Saturday Review*, December 16, 1905: 'The Adulteration of the Peerage.' But after this violent outburst the *Review* was completely silent about the creations of January and June 1906. The *National Review*, in January 1906 very sarcastic about Sir Herbert Stern's elevation to the peerage, expressed its delight at seeing Sir Alfred Harmsworth made a peer. 'A man of supreme ability. . . . Now that he has become a Peer he may turn his attention to public life. He would be an interesting ingredient in a Cabinet and an admirable head of a department.'

be omitted.[1] But neither in 1906 nor in 1909 did these incidents reach the ears of the public. And in the end both the King and the nobility submitted.

3

For this capitulation two reasons can be given. The first of these on which we have already had occasion to remark,[2] is that the House of Lords was also being made plutocratic by another process, the reverse of the former, the fact namely that the members of the old aristocracy to repair fortunes damaged by a diminished rent roll, were engaging in business. Lloyd George was speaking the language of another age when in his campaign of 1909 he attempted to direct his hearers' indignation against the landlords alone. The wealthy landowners who lived on the rents of an urban estate or the royalties of a coal mine were a minority of their class. The others, owners of arable or meadow land, ruined under a system of uncompromising free trade by the fall of prices which had marked the last quarter of the nineteenth century and crushed by the enormous succession duties imposed upon them by Sir William Harcourt and lately increased by Asquith, would have been unable to meet the heavy cost of keeping up their estates, if they had not found new sources of wealth in the great joint-stock companies. A list drawn up in November 1909 by a leading Unionist journal, the *Standard*,[3] enumerated thirty-five bankers in the House of Lords. But among them were a Duke of Buccleuch, a Marquis of Ailesbury, a Lord Fitzwilliam and a Lord Harrowby. It enumerated thirty-nine 'captains of industry' but among the number were the Duke of Abercorn, chairman of the British South Africa Company, the Duke of Argyll, chairman of two steamship companies, and the Earl of Shrewsbury, chairman of the Brereton collieries—that is to say, while business men were becoming peers, peers were becoming business men, so that when the new rich reached the Upper House they found themselves on familiar ground.

The second reason why the new elevations to the peerage caused

[1] Sir Sidney Lee, *King Edward VII*, vol. ii, pp. 451–2.
[2] In my *History of the English People*, vol. v, pp. 15–18.
[3] November 22, 1909.

no scandal was their connection with the system of party organization. In older days two great opposing parties had indeed existed. But discipline was not very strict and both alike consisted of a loose alliance of great families whose heads fought an election as private individuals, some in agreement with the Government in office, others opposed to it. The corruption that existed was practised either by these noble families who bid against each other for the representation of 'county' seats or by *nouveaux riches* who sought to snatch from the former representation of boroughs in which the number of voters was sufficiently small for their votes to be purchased *en bloc*. But little by little as the system of representation became democratic the parties had consolidated their organization, had imposed on candidates a collective discipline, and subjected the electorate to methods of corruption equally collective. Henceforward politics was a battle between two wealthy middle-class groups which whenever a costly measure of social reform was passed submitted with equal resignation, perhaps with equal lack of enthusiasm, to the demands of the working class, and conducted their struggle, as though performing a ceremony, according to rules accepted by both parties.

The most fundamental of these rules was that either party had the right to collect sufficient funds to face the next election with some prospect of success. Wealthy candidates paid not only their own expenses but the expenses of poor candidates and wealthy members of the party contributed to the party funds in the hope of securing not a seat in the Commons but a peerage or at the least a baronetcy or knighthood[1] or one of those decorations whose number had been multiplied of late years.[2] Possibly there was not

[1] H. of C., February 19, 1908. H. C. Lea's Speech: '. . . He left out the usual baronetcy for the Lord Mayor of London and the two knighthoods to the sheriffs for entertaining foreign potentates at their own expense. From November 1903 to December 1905 the Tory Party were responsible for the creation of 13 Peers, 16 Privy Councillors, 33 Baronets, and 76 Knights: a total of 138 in two years, of which number 36 or 28.1 per cent were Members of that House. From December 1905 to November 1907, two years of Liberal régime, 20 Peers were created, 19 Privy Councillors, 33 Baronets, and 95 Knights; total 167, of which 37 or 22.1 per cent were Members of that House.' (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxxiv, p. 911.)

[2] Arthur Ponsonby, *The Decline of Aristocracy*, 1912, p. 124: 'The practice has never reached the absurd extreme to which it has been pushed in foreign countries, where soldiers, courtiers, diplomatists, and officers are literally plastered over with decorations, but they have already become common enough in this country to have lost all distinction. Only within the last thirty years six new orders, two new decorations and several new medals (not war medals) have been constituted. The large membership of these four orders shows there is justification for saying that the craving for this really rather childish form of public recognition is on the increase. The Victorian Order has some 870 members, the

in every case an express agreement to this effect. But when a wealthy manufacturer or merchant had contributed a large sum of money to the party funds, the Government could hardly refuse those who asked for some honour to be given him in return. And on the other hand when the insistent request of a financier who wanted to see himself a 'baron' had been granted, he could do no less than show his gratitude to the party which had made him a peer by contributing to the party funds in proportion to his wealth. The Home Secretary and the Patronage Secretary for the ministerialists, the Opposition leader and Whip for the opposite party, conducted these negotiations which, during the powerful wave of democratic feeling expressed by the Election of 1906, inevitably aroused protests. A certain Lancashire magnate whose elevation to the peerage had caused scandal in 1895 and who had loaded his native town with his interested benefactions, became on this account the object of such violent local attacks that he decided to leave the neighbourhood and transfer his gifts to some other district of England.[1] But if the incident is typical, still more typical is the fact that so little was said of it in the papers, and the equanimity with which on the whole the nation accepted this sale of honours carried on almost in public. In a country where the party organization is loose, extremists on the left or right may successfully agitate against an abuse of this kind; but in England they were faced by the solid mass of moderate members of both parties leagued against them to maintain practices equally indispensable to both. Lord Robert Cecil among the Tories, Hilaire Belloc and two or three other isolated individuals among the

Imperial Service Order 475, the Distinguished Service Order 1,650, and the Order of Merit 17.

Some of the old orders are restricted in their membership: the Garter, the Thistle, and Saint Patrick include altogether under 70 members but the Bath has been extended to 2,000 members, Saint Michael and Saint George to 1,000, and in addition to these are the Star of India (291 members) and the Indian Empire (414—not including natives of India). This makes a great total of nearly 6,800 decorated persons, not counting the recipients of war medals, the Victoria Cross, the order of St. John of Jerusalem, Volunteer and Territorial decorations, orders for Women, or the vast number who receive ceremonial medals.' A detailed analysis of all the honours (titles and decorations) bestowed from the beginning of Asquith's Government in April 1908 to the end of Lloyd George's Government is contained in an interesting article by Harold Laski entitled 'The Prime Ministers' Honour Lists' (*Nation*, July 15, 1922).

[1] James Williamson, manufacturer of linoleum in Lancashire created in 1895 Lord Ashton. This creation, together with that of Sidney Stern, made on its deathbed by the Liberal Cabinet which was resigning had aroused strong Unionist protests. 'Lord Linoleum' was accused of buying his title by a gift of £100,000 to the party funds. See the obituary notice of Lord Ashton in *The Times*, May 28, 1930.

Radicals, attempted in vain to rouse Press and Parliament from the apathy they had deliberately assumed on the subject. The Speaker, the umpire between the parties, acting in concert with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Arthur Balfour contrived to prevent the question even being raised. He claimed that since the grant of honours was part of the royal prerogative, to make the Prime Minister responsible was to derogate from the dignity of the Crown.[1] Silence fell and the Liberal party continued to replenish its funds by manufacturing noblemen with the tacit approval of the Unionist Opposition.

We must not then picture England in 1910 as on the verge of revolution and the House of Lords threatened with violent extinction for throwing out the Budget. The rejection did not provoke the riotous demonstrations against the peers responsible for it which had been provoked in 1832 by the rejection of the Reform Bill. After, all the majority of the population both in Great Britain and Ireland was opposed to the Budget on one point or another, and the House of Lords did not incur any real or profound unpopularity by rejecting it. If there were still old families whose uncompromising Conservatism protested indignantly against the growth of the democratic spirit and the debasement of the House of Lords, they were not numerous, and hidden in the depths of the country far from arousing indignation they inspired respect. Other noble families in touch with all the movements of London and cosmopolitan life might label themselves 'Tory'. But their drawing-rooms welcomed men of letters, artists, actors, and journalists of every political complexion. And the vast majority of the peers were men of fashion averse to serious thought who liked hunting, racing, sport of every description, and who, because they shared the taste for open air exercise and the love of

[1] The Parliamentary campaign against the traffic in titles was begun when the great shopkeeper Whiteley was created a peer, by Hugh Lea, a Radical M.P. who wrote a letter to *The Times* denouncing the sale of honours. (*The Times*, July 12, 1907. Cf. the letter signed M.P. in the *Morning Post* on July 13, 1907, and G. K. Chesterton's Letter in the *Daily News* July 15, 1907.) At the same time the question was raised in the House of Commons by Lord Robert Cecil (July 12, 15; *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxviii, pp. 198, 346 sqq.), but the Leader of the House of Commons and the Leader of the Opposition asked the House to pass to the order of the day and the Speaker did as they requested. Cf. the debate provoked the following year by Hilaire Belloc (H. of C., February 19, 1908; *Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., vol. clxxxiv, pp. 899 sqq.) and Lord Knolly's letter to the *Glasgow Herald*, September 7, 1909. For a general discussion of the sale of titles see an interesting article entitled 'The New Corruption. The Commons and the Sale of Honours' in the *Candid Quarterly Review of Public Affairs* . . . conducted by Thomas Gibson Bowles, No. 1, February 1914 (vol. i, pp. 39 sqq.).

gambling common to all Englishmen, were perhaps more intimately in touch with popular feeling than many a Radical orator. In the political sphere they gave little trouble. Normally they never took part in the sittings of a House to which the Commons usually left little work and when an important debate was held, barely a fifth of the peerage was present. But the nation liked to see them preside over the amusements of the people.

And not only over the amusements of the populace but at the ceremonial functions of British public life. We have seen how Haldane, to enable the Lords-Lieutenant in the counties to patronize the reorganization of the reserve force, had succeeded in extending their functions on condition that they were assisted in the performance of these new duties by committees of democratic composition. About the same time violent Radical protests were raised against the appointments to the benches of magistrates made by the Lords-Lieutenant. Too many Unionists they complained were made Justices of the Peace, and only a handful of Liberals. But the Lords-Lieutenant had the good sense to recognize that the charge was well founded and asked to be released from an exclusive responsibility which was proving too invidious. Finally, a compromise was reached which resembled the provisions of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act of 1907. Henceforward a local advisory committee composed of members of the different parties would assist the Lords-Lieutenant, who, however, would make the actual choice after consultation with the committee.[1] In one of his most violent diatribes Lloyd George

[1] One of the first measures passed under the Liberal Government had been a Statute which modified the institution of Justices of the Peace by 6 Edw. 7, Cap. 16: An Act to amend the law relating to Justices of the Peace (*Justices of the Peace Act*, 1906). The Act abolished all pecuniary and residential qualifications and the ineligibility of solicitors. It was immediately after this that the question of their nomination was raised. See the memorandum presented to the Chancellor by Mr. John Brunner in the name of 88 Liberal and Labour Members of Parliament and the Chancellor's reply (*The Times*, December 29, 1906). To understand the exact nature of the reform, it must be premised that hitherto the Chancellor had appointed the Justices of the Peace on the Lord-Lieutenant's recommendation. In future, the latter would recommend only candidates who had first been recommended to him by the newly appointed consultative committees. In November 1906 the Government appointed a Royal Commission on the Selection of Justices of the Peace which reported on July 6, 1910. Its recommendations were adopted, see H. of C., May 1, 1911, Asquith's speech (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1911, 5th Series, vol. xxi, p. 103). The appointment of Justices of the Peace continued until 1912 to arouse serious protests. Since then no complaints have been raised. See the letters to *The Times* by Sir Hugh Bell, September 11, 1925, Lord Graham, September 22, 1925, the Chancellor, Lord Cave, October 1, 1925, and Lord Haldane's speech to the fourth annual conference of the

admitted implicitly the continued popularity of the peerage. 'As long as they were contented to be mere idols on their pedestals, preserving that stately silence which became their rank and their intelligence, all went well, and the average British citizen rather looked up to them.'[1] In 1909 they made a mistake; 'they stepped off their perch' and threw the country into a turmoil which might well have been avoided. Obviously, they must be taught a lesson. But how many people wanted that lesson to be a severe one?

From the moment of the Lords' rejection of the Budget, and the subsequent verdict of the electorate in favour of the Government, it was noticeable that Lloyd George abstained from those inflammatory speeches by which the year before he had done his utmost to intimidate, or rather to exasperate, the 'Dukes'. The Premier, Henry Asquith, assumed the leadership of a campaign in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had no longer a direct interest. He gave it the strictly constitutional character of a debate between two parties equally anxious not to allow the country to slip into revolution and against whose powerful organization the free lances and extremists were powerless. A choice presented itself between two alternatives. Either the composition of the House of Lords could be left untouched and its control over the decisions of the Commons restricted, or its control could be left intact and its composition reformed.

4

Anxious to act as speedily as possible, the Cabinet did not touch the question of reforming the Lords but choosing the former alternative asked for a Statute which would expressly restrict their prerogative and make it impossible for them in future to violate constitutional usage, as they had violated it by rejecting the Budget. Asquith therefore adopted the attitude of a defender of the constitution threatened by revolutionaries. For a manifest error of judgment on the part of the Unionists enabled him to make the Liberal programme appear Conservative. 'The immediate cause, the actual irritant cause of what we may with reason

Magistrates' Association at the Guildhall, October 23, 1925. The appointment of the Lords-Lieutenant themselves was a source of friction between 1906 and 1910 between the King and his Liberal ministers. (Sir Sidney Lee, *King Edward VII*, vol. ii, p. 447.)

[1] Speech at Newcastle-on-Tyne, October 9, 1909.

call a constitutional crisis is the entirely novel pretension on the part of the House of Lords, not only to interfere in matters of public finance, but even to exercise a controlling right upon them and mould them to its liking . . . hence this paradoxical issue. It is we, the Progressive party, who are occupying today, before all else, a conservative and constitutional position. We are defending the liberties that the past has handed down to us against encroachments and usurpations which have for the first time received the official approbation of the Tory party.' When therefore on March 29, 1910, he invited the newly-elected House of Commons to pass three resolutions which embodied the Government's policy, the first of these declared it to be 'expedient that the House of Lords be disabled by law from rejecting or amending a Money Bill'. To avoid ambiguity, a Money Bill was defined as any Bill which in the judgment of the Speaker contained provisions relative to one or more of the following subjects: the imposition, abolition, reduction, alteration or modification of a tax, the charging of any item of expenditure to the Consolidated Fund, or the authorization of any item of expenditure by the Commons, the budget of receipts, the employment, control or regulation of the national revenue, the issue, guarantee, or repayment of a loan, or questions indirectly relating to any or all of these subjects.

But the Liberal Cabinet, secure of its parliamentary majority, was not satisfied with a defensive victory over the Unionists and the House of Lords. It met the Unionist offensive by a counter-offensive. In the speech from which we have just quoted Asquith denied not only the right claimed by the Upper House to limit the financial powers of the House of Commons, but even its right to compel a dissolution, since it was itself exempt from dissolution, and in this way to set up and overthrow Governments at its pleasure. This amounted to contesting the Lords' right to do what they had successfully done in 1886 by summoning the Liberal Government, if it dared, to appeal to the electorate. No one, however, at the time seems to have charged the House of Lords with a breach of the Constitution. The Cabinet's present design—an obvious innovation—was not simply to declare by an express Statute the Lords' impotence in financial questions, but to limit their powers in every sphere.

The method by which the Cabinet proposed to do this was no novelty. It was as old as Radicalism itself.

As early as 1835 when the two Houses joined issue over the Bill reforming Municipal Corporations, a young Radical member, Roebuck, had moved that the amendments introduced into the Bill by the Lords should be rejected *en bloc*. He had then proceeded to point out that as a result of the Reform of 1832 two Houses confronted each other divergent in origin and in the temper which inspired them, doomed therefore to conflict, and that this conflict might issue in revolution unless a constitutional procedure were devised for settling such crises. He therefore proposed that the House of Lords should be deprived of its absolute veto and should in future possess only a power to suspend Bills. It would still be able to send a Bill back to the House of Commons, but if the Commons passed it a second time during the same session and the King gave it his assent it would become law without being passed by the Lords.[1] A few months later James Mill, who since Bentham's death had been the philosopher and patriarch of British Radicalism, gave Roebuck's proposal his blessing.[2]

Half a century passed and the veto of the Lords was untouched. Then a crisis threatened. It was in 1884. The occasion was a third Reform Bill of an extremely democratic character, passed by a Radical House of Commons. An important speech was delivered at a public meeting by the Radical veteran John Bright.[3] He prescribed exactly the same remedy as Roebuck forty-nine years before. Its effect would, he said, be to get rid of the veto altogether except in a few very exceptional cases. Only genuine statesmen would take part in the debates of the Upper House. Peers who were indifferent to politics would enjoy their titles and their honours in the counties and would not trouble to come to Westminster, on a fool's errand, to reject a measure that was certain to be adopted the following year. These significant words reveal the reasons why the Radical party preferred limiting the powers of the House of Lords to altering its composition. It should be made harmless, but that once accomplished, there was no reason why it should not be left intact as a picturesque survival.

[1] H. of C., August 31, September 2, 1835 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. xxx, pp. 1162 sqq., 1269–70).

[2] 'Let Bills be sent up from the Commons, so soon as the pressure from without shall have compelled them also to open their eyes, for unseating the thirty Prelates and suspending the definitive veto of the Peers—tacking them both to the supplies.' (*Westminster Review*, January 1836, vol. xxiv, p. 78.)

[3] Speech at Birmingham, August 4, 1884.

On this occasion a compromise was reached and a long period followed during which the electorate and the Lords agreed in preventing the Liberals from passing a Home Rule Bill. Before the General Election of 1895 the Liberal leaders were fond of saying that, if their party were returned, they would take measures to restrict the powers of the House of Lords and abolish its veto. But the Liberals were not returned and it was not until a decade later after the Election of 1906 that the problem of the relations between the two Chambers once more became acute. The Liberal Ministers at once revived the old programme of Roebuck and John Bright. At the beginning of 1907—when a serious conflict had just broken out between the two Houses on the subject of the Education Bill—the question was systematically examined. Obviously, a Government measure could not be content with the rough suggestions which had been enough for Roebuck and Bright. It was suggested at first that in case of conflict between the two Chambers, the House of Lords should elect a hundred delegates who sitting together with the House of Commons should constitute a joint body with which the final decision would rest.[1] It was an excessively simplified solution which Campbell-Bannerman modified by incorporating it into a system of very different inspiration. The resolution which he carried in the House of Commons on June 26, 1907, by a majority of 285 provided that in case of conflict both Houses should elect each an equal and limited number of delegates to arrange if possible a compromise. If they failed the House of Commons could pass the original Bill a second time with any amendment it thought desirable. If it were thrown out again, a joint conference would again meet to seek a compromise. If it failed again the Commons could pass the Bill a third time in which case it would become law without the assent of the Lords. To prevent the Commons abusing their new prerogative, the legal duration of Parliament would be reduced from seven to five years.[2]

What use would the Liberal Cabinet make of this resolution?

[1] J. A. Spender, *The Life of the Right Hon. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman*, vol. ii, p. 350. See also Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's criticisms, ibid., p. 351. James Mill had already considered the idea in the article mentioned above. (*Westminster Review*, January 1836; vol. xxiv, pp. 76–7.)

[2] See the debates H. of C., June 24, 25, 26, 1907 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxvi, pp. 909 sqq., 1157 sqq., 1408 sqq.).

Take it for granted that the House of Lords would accept it as in the seventeenth century it had accepted the resolutions restricting its financial powers? Or would it immediately send up a measure which it knew beforehand that the Upper House would dislike and if it were thrown out embody the resolution in a Bill? In that case the problem would arise of the method by which the Lords could be compelled to pass the Bill.[1] As we know, no action was taken. The Government waited before joining battle until the House of Lords presumed to contest the financial sovereignty of the Lower House. Then the machinery held in reserve for the last three years was put in motion. The second and third resolutions submitted by Asquith to the House of Commons on March 24 resembled that of 1907 in two essential points. They made it impossible for the Lords to reject more than twice in the course of the same session a Bill passed by the Commons. And they restricted the duration of Parliament to five years. But on one point they were more radical. They made no provision either after the first or the second passing of a Bill by the Commons for the meeting of a 'conference', a committee of arbitration, to attempt a friendly settlement of the dispute.[2]

We must not mistake the significance of this second resolution, no longer Conservative but a manifest innovation. The Unionists' chief argument in favour of the prerogatives of the Upper House was the necessity for protecting the country against the autocratic rule of a legislature which it had no doubt elected but at a particular juncture and as the result of a movement of opinion from which a reaction might well have followed. Moreover, even if this were not the case, the election did not imply that the nation accepted every point of an extremely complicated programme. The House of Lords therefore fulfilled an extremely useful function when it distinguished between the different items of the Government's programme and accepted or rejected the Bills sent up from the Commons as in its opinion they did or did not express the permanent will of the nation. If the Nonconformists

[1] See the speech delivered at Edinburgh on January 24 by the Lord Advocate, Thomas Shaw.

[2] It is of interest however to observe that some politicians of the left groups depicted the proposal to establish a 'conference' as inspired by motives far from conciliatory. See J. R. MacDonald, speech at Bradford, October 13, 1907: '. . . The Liberal party were going to fight the House of Lords by the creation of a third Chamber, or joint committee of both Houses which would lord it with an iron hand over both the Lords and the Commons.' But his argument was perhaps only rhetorical.

demanded an alteration of the Education Bill of 1902, was it not evident, more evident each year, that the majority of the electorate, indeed the majority of the Liberal party itself, took no interest in the question? If the Irish Nationalists gave the Liberal Cabinet the indispensable support of their eighty votes was it not with the avowed intention of carrying by what amounted to a ruse their Home Rule Bill, which though it figured on the official programme of the party, could not be regarded with any certainty as representing the wishes of the Liberal electorate? The Lords allowed the Liberals, if they desired, to make a fresh appeal to the country and if the electorate still supported them the Bill in question would have received the sanction of the popular vote and the Upper House would give way, as it was doing at this very moment by passing Lloyd George's Budget. But this right to compel a dissolution of Parliament and the election of a new House of Commons was regarded by the Lords as the core of their prerogative.[1]

The Liberal reply to this argument was twofold. In the first place, they alleged that the Conservative peers abused their power by rejecting Bills passed by the Lower House to which it would be difficult to maintain that the country was hostile but whose nature was too special for it to be possible on such an issue to undertake the expense of consulting it. The country, for example, would not appreciate its opinion being asked on the plural vote or on Welsh Disestablishment. Yet it would be impossible to deny that the majority of the electors were in favour of abolishing the plural vote or that the entire body of Welsh Liberals—that is, the overwhelming majority of the Welsh people, wanted disestablishment, or to allege that their claim met with any strong opposition from the English and Scottish electorate. In the second place, they argued that a body whose composition was so aristocratic as the House of Lords could not exercise this right of control satisfactorily. Since it was exclusively hereditary and the new members who entered it were men whose class or caste interest would quickly imbue them with the prejudices of an hereditary nobility,

[1] There was a method of restricting by law the veto of the Lords which would actually have had the effect of strengthening its powers understood in this sense. W. E. H. Lecky (*Democracy and Liberty*, 1896, vol. i, pp. 386–7) proposed that no law could be passed in opposition to the Upper House which had not been passed by two successive Houses of Commons and by a majority of two-thirds. He adds: 'Such a change would, in theory, diminish the powers of the House of Lords. In practice it would, I believe, considerably increase them.'

it was inevitably an appanage of the Conservative party and the Liberals a small minority. The House of Lords therefore exercised its function of control only when the Cabinet was Liberal. Suppose a Liberal majority unexpectedly passed a Bill conferring a separate Parliament upon Ireland, the House of Lords would rise in revolt and demand an appeal to the country. But suppose a Unionist majority, though elected on a programme of opposition to Home Rule, unexpectedly passed a Bill in favour of tariff reform, would the House of Lords on the same principles compel the Government to consult the country before making such a serious decision? On the contrary, they would of course register automatically the decision of the Lower House. In short, the British Constitution, according to the Liberals, was bicameral only in appearance. In reality there was only one sovereign Chamber, the House of Lords when the Liberals had a majority in the Commons, the House of Commons when the Conservatives were in a majority.

In that case, why not adopt the programme of unmitigated democracy and abolish the House of Lords? The Labour members and a handful of Radicals were in favour of this course. But it was perhaps simply to discharge their consciences and without deep conviction. In any case that solution found no favour with the ministers and the vast majority of the Liberal party. Then why not reform the House of Lords and while keeping it in existence make its composition democratic? In principle the Government was in favour of reforming the House of Lords. It had been explicitly mentioned in the King's speech. But on the one hand it was a difficult problem which it would take time to settle, and the previous November had made it clear that a settlement of the relations between the two Houses could not be delayed. And on the other hand there was a danger that such a reform by making the constitution of the House of Lords less of an anachronism might strengthen its position in face of the Commons. Even after the House of Lords had been reformed it would therefore still be necessary to define strictly the relations between the two Houses and prevent a right to revise and suspend the Bills passed by the representatives of the people degenerating into a right of absolute veto. This in the eyes of the Liberals was the essential matter.

5

It was left therefore to the Conservatives to put forward as a practical issue the question of the Reform of the House of Lords, deliberately thrust into the background by the Liberals. In truth, the question was not new. Twice already within the last half century it had been raised, on both occasions after a democratic reform of the representative system which had convinced a number of peers that the House of Lords would do well to modernize itself if it were to continue to exercise its traditional functions in relation to the Lower House. On both occasions it was a Liberal who had taken the initiative, but a Liberal of independent views, who received little support from the leaders of his party and found many supporters among the Conservatives.

In 1869, two years after the passing of the important Reform Bill which in current parlance had given universal suffrage (or something approaching it) to the boroughs, Lord John Russell submitted to the House of Lords a Bill authorizing the Crown to create life peerages. They would not exceed twenty-eight in all and no more than four might be created in any one year. These life peers were to be chosen from persons who had occupied high judicial or administrative positions, or had sat in the Commons for ten years at least, or had achieved distinction in science, literature or art. His object was to strengthen the position of the House of Lords, and improve the quality of its debates 'by introducing there the talents of a Jenner or a Watt'. Lord John was a former Liberal Prime Minister who watched with uneasiness the progress of the new democratic England. The Liberal party, which under Gladstone's leadership occupied the majority of seats in the Commons, bore little likeness to that which he had himself led before the reform of 1867. Many Conservatives approved of his proposal. To confer an hereditary peerage on judges, on soldiers without private wealth, in a democratic age in which a Government could no longer lavish grants and sinecures on new peers and their descendants, would be to create a class of impoverished peers who would not enhance the prestige of the order. Lord Salisbury declared it advisable to widen the composition of the House of Lords by introducing representatives of the intellectual and industrial classes. Lord John's Bill nearly passed

the House of Lords but at the last moment dislike of change proved too powerful. It was rejected on the third reading.[1]

On one point nevertheless everyone agreed that it met an urgent need. The House of Lords was not only a legislative body of the first rank, it was also a supreme court of justice. But it was ill constituted to perform this latter function. For such a task, the Lord Chancellor, one or two peers who had been former Lord Chancellors and had been raised to the peerage after filling other important judicial posts, men whose intellect had often been weakened by age, did not suffice. Already in 1856 the Government of the day had attempted to promote a lawyer to the Upper House as a life peer. But the attempt had aroused the wrath of the House of Lords and after lengthy debates in both Houses the Cabinet had given way and transformed Baron Wensleydale's life peerage into an hereditary peerage. After the failure of Lord John's Bill, which would have solved the problem, another method was adopted. In 1873 when the organization of the superior courts of justice was completely remodelled, the opportunity was taken to divest the House of Lords of all its judicial functions, which were given to a new body called the 'High Court of Appeal'. The Act was scarcely on the Statute Book when the Lords repented of having surrendered so easily the privileges of their order. The execution of the Statute was suspended and a compromise was finally reached. Above the new court of appeal the House of Lords remained the court of last instance. But when sitting in that capacity it would be assisted by Lords of Appeal in Ordinary, professional judges appointed by the executive. Two at first, their number would be raised later to four. So long as they exercised their functions they would possess all the rights of a member of the House of Lords. That meant very often that they would be peers for life. And this fact would be expressly recognized by a Statute of 1888 which declared all the Lords of Appeal were life peers. It was the first departure from the principle of an Upper Chamber exclusively hereditary.[2]

[1] H. of L., April 9, 27; June 3, 8; July 8, 1869 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. cxcv, pp. 452 sqq.; 1648 sqq.; vol. cxcvi, pp. 1172 sqq.; 1370 sqq.; vol. cxcvii, pp. 1387 sqq.). From a speech made by Lord Lyndhurst in 1856 it would seem that the idea of creating life peers had already found favour during the struggle over the Reform Bill with certain members of Lord Grey's Cabinet. (H. of L., February 7, 1856; ibid., vol. cxl, pp. 275–6.)

[2] For all this legislation see 36 & 37 Vict., Cap. 66: An Act for the constitution of a Supreme Court and for other purposes relating to the better Administration of Justice in

In 1884 the representative basis of the House of Commons was rendered still more democratic. The new reform extended to the counties the franchise which the Act of 1867 had established in the boroughs. We now find the young Lord Rosebery playing the part played fifteen years earlier by the aged Lord John Russell, and bringing forward in the same spirit the problem of reforming the House of Lords.

While the Bill was being debated in the Commons and John Bright was raising the other question of restricting the Lords' prerogatives, Lord Rosebery moved in the Upper House that an 'enquiry' should be undertaken 'into the best means to employ for improving its effectualness'.[1] It was desirable, he urged, that medicine, science, art, literature, commerce, and even the working class should be represented, also India and the Colonies. It would also perhaps be advisable to create life peers and permit men who were not peers to take part as consultants in the work of the House. The motion was rejected. But Lord Rosebery did not abandon the idea and he found support among the Conservatives.

In 1886 the Conservative party, transformed in virtue of its coalition with those Liberals who disapproved of Home Rule into the Unionist party, returned to office. In 1888 a Radical member invited the House of Commons to pass a resolution condemning the principle of an hereditary legislature.[2] His motion was rejected as we should expect of an assembly with a Conservative majority. But it again drew public attention to the problem of the composition of the Upper House, and the Unionists, who felt their hold on office precarious, were the first to interest themselves in it. Lord Rosebery came forward again, once more asked for the appointment of a Committee to examine the question, and

England: and to authorize the transfer to the Appellate Division of such Supreme Court of the Jurisdiction of the Judicial Committee of Her Majesty's Privy Council (*Supreme Court of Judicature Act*, 1873). 37 & 38 Vict., Cap. 83: An Act for delaying the coming into operation of the Supreme Court of Judicature, 1873 (*Supreme Court of Judicature [commencement] Act*). 38 & 39 Vict., Cap. 97: An Act to amend and extend the Supreme Court of Judicature Act, 1873 (*Supreme Court of Judicature Act*, 1875). 39 & 40 Vict., Cap. 59: An Act for amending the Law in respect of the Appellate Jurisdiction of the House of Lords and for other purposes (*Appellate Jurisdiction Act*, 1876). 50 & 51 Vict., Cap. 70: An Act to amend the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876 (*Appellate Jurisdiction Act*, 1888). In another and more indirect way the principle of life peerages has found expression in the House of Lords. The Cabinet when conferring new peerages so lavishly, has often conferred them on bachelors or men without male heirs. In theory such a peerage is hereditary. In practice it is a life peerage. We cannot regard Viscount Morley, Viscount Haldane, and at the present time Viscount Snowden as anything but life peers.

[1] H. of L., June 1889 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. cccxxxii, pp. 937 sqq.).

[2] H. of C., March 9, 1888. Labouchere's motion (ibid., vol. cccxxiii, pp. 763 sqq.).

suggested an Upper House composed in part of peers elected by their order, in part of members elected either by the new County Councils or by the House of Commons itself. Life peers might be created by the Government. The Self-Governing Colonies might send representatives. In case of conflict both Houses would sit and vote together in a joint sitting.[1] And, on the other hand, an independent Unionist, Lord Dunraven, brought in a Bill to reform the House of Lords, more carefully thought out than any of the earlier projects and in entire harmony with Lord Rosebery's views.[2] He proposed an Upper House consisting of two elements almost equal in number. There would be hereditary peers elected to represent the entire body of hereditary peers as was already the case for Scotland and Ireland, but there would also be representatives of the Colonies, the Church of England, the free Churches, and the Catholic Church, of literature and the sciences, above all representatives elected by the County Councils. Lord Salisbury, as we should expect, condemned the Bill, but he admitted that it contained acceptable suggestions and promised on behalf of the Government to introduce a Bill 'to facilitate the entry of life peers into the House of Lords'. He soon kept his word. He brought in a Bill very obviously inspired by Lord Russell's Bill of 1869.[3] The Crown would be empowered to create life peers chosen among the judges, soldiers, sailors, diplomatists, high officials who were members of the Privy Council and Colonial Governors. Under exceptional circumstances and by a special procedure intended to prevent any possibility of abuse the Crown might create a limited number of new peers, outside these categories—at the most five in one year. And the total number of life peers must never exceed fifty. We may add that by extending a measure adopted in 1871 to exclude bankrupts[4] Lord Salisbury's Bill permitted the Crown acting in concert with the House of Lords to expel a peer judged unworthy of a seat in the House.

But the Bill introduced by the Unionist Premier was soon dropped. The General Election of 1895 seemed to inaugurate in English history an epoch of Conservative supremacy which would

[1] H. of L., March 19, 1888 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. cccxxiii, pp. 1538 sqq.).

[2] H. of L., April 26, 1888 (ibid., vol. cccxxv, pp. 518 sqq.). See also his article written some years before entitled 'The House of Lords. Its Reform.' (*Nineteenth Century*, No. 84, February 4, 1884, vol. xv, pp. 200 sqq.).

[3] H. of L., June 18, 1888 (*Parl. Deb.*, 3rd Ser., vol. cccxxvii, pp. 387 sqq.).

[4] 34 & 35 Vict., Cap. 50: An Act for disqualifying Bankrupts from sitting or voting in the House of Lords. (*Bankruptcy Disqualification Act*, 1871.)

be prolonged indefinitely. The sole echo of these projects was the occasional discussion in imperialist circles of a reform of the House of Lords which would solve at the same time the problem of Irish Home Rule. Separate local parliaments, it was suggested, should be set up for England, Scotland, and Ireland, possibly also for Wales. An Upper House, reformed and rendered elective, would represent not only the entire United Kingdom but the Empire. The discussion however remained academic. The scheme never enjoyed the least popular support either in England or Ireland or in the Self-Governing Colonies. But the situation was changed by the Election of 1906. It was not surprising that this dramatic reverse shook the Unionists from their slumbers, and that the reform of the House of Lords as well as the restriction of its prerogative, became once more a burning question.

6

In 1907 without waiting for Campbell-Bannerman's motion in favour of abolishing the veto of the House of Lords, Lord Newton introduced a Bill to reform it. The measure restricted the right to sit in the Upper Chamber to those hereditary peers who had occupied certain important positions in the State; the hereditary peers would elect representatives equal in number to a fourth of their entire body, and the Crown would be empowered to create a hundred life peers. But instead of debating the clauses, the Lords appointed a Committee to advise as to the best methods 'of reforming the work of the House of Lords'. Lord Crewe, speaking on behalf of the Government, refused even to express an opinion of Lord Newton's Bill. It was not a question of altering the composition of the House of Lords but of settling the relations between the two Houses.[1] The Committee was composed entirely of Unionists with the exception of Lord Rosebery, who could no longer be called a Liberal. It was on his motion that the Committee had been appointed. And it elected him its chairman.

It reported in December 1908.[2] About the principle on which reform should be based it had no hesitations. It declared it 'un-

[1] H. of L., May 6, 1907 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxiii, pp. 1203 sqq.).

[2] Report from the Select Committee on the House of Lords together with the proceedings of the Committee and Appendix, 1908.

desirable that the possession of a peerage should give by itself the right of sitting and voting in the House of Lords'. To apply that principle it suggested a House of Lords composed of 200 peers elected by the entire order, like the existing representative peers of Scotland and Ireland, peers who had the right to membership because they held or had held a number of high offices; according to the report there were 130 of these in the contemporary peerage, and finally a maximum of forty life peers. But the plan, as the members of the Committee admitted, was open to a serious objection. When the 130 peers had been deducted, who retained their seats in virtue of the high offices they occupied or had occupied in the State, only nonentities would be left. Therefore, the 200 representative peers must in the very nature of things be nonentities. Moreover, being elected by a body of which the overwhelming majority was Conservative, they would be all Conservatives. There would not even be amongst their number that small majority of independent Liberals which a purely hereditary House contained. What then should be done? Admit representatives elected by the Borough and County Councils?[1] The suggestion was too bold for the members of the Committee, more timid in 1907 than Lord Rosebery and Lord Dunraven had been in 1888. Allow the government of the day with a majority in the Commons to nominate a certain number of its followers as members of the House of Lords for the duration of Parliament? It was a bizarre suggestion which the Committee rejected by a large majority.

It was once more left to Lord Rosebery to raise in 1910 this question of the reform of the House of Lords. Arthur Balfour, in his address to the electorate of December 10, had deliberately shirked the issue, careful even, as he has himself told us, not to declare against reform. Why indeed should he commit himself at a moment when he might still hope for a victory at the polls which would be the victory of the House of Lords as at present composed? The Unionists therefore who had indeed been defeated at the January Election but whose defeat had not been hopeless, while not going so far as to place reform of the Lords on their programme, welcomed the intervention of an independent states-

[1] Lord Saint Aldwyn to Lord Newton, February 8, 1907 (Lady Victoria Hicks-Beach, *Life of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach* (Earl Saint Aldwyn) 1932, vol. ii, pp. 255–6). Lord Saint Aldwyn suggested the election, at every General Election, of a number of peers not only by the County Councils but also by the Colonial legislatures.

man who though bitterly hostile to the Budget of 1909 had nevertheless advised the House of Lords—how wisely the event had proved—against the tactical mistake of throwing it out. Lord Rosebery's three resolutions of March 14, and his two more detailed resolutions of April 13, embodied in substance the principles laid down in 1908 by the committee over which he had presided. On March 14 he moved that 'the possession of a peerage should no longer confer, by itself, the right of sitting and voting in the House of Lords'. On April 13 he proposed a House of Lords consisting in the first place of peers elected by the body of hereditary peers, in the second place of peers sitting in virtue of their official position, in the third place of peers 'chosen from outside'. What are we to understand by these words? Life peers created by the Crown? Or temporary peers chosen by a more or less democratic electorate?[1] The formula was intentionally vague.

II FROM THE DEATH OF EDWARD VII TO THE PASSING OF THE PARLIAMENT BILL

I

Thus, about the end of April 1910 the plan of the Government and Lord Rosebery's plan to which it would seem Lord Lansdowne had given his approval[2] confronted each other. The Government had carried in the House of Commons their resolutions intended to weaken the check exercised by the Upper upon the Lower House. Lord Rosebery had carried in the House of Lords two resolutions intended to strengthen the Upper House by modifying its composition. Asquith had just introduced a Bill to give effect to his policy, Lord Rosebery promised to do the same thing for his. What would happen if when the Commons passed the Government's Bill, the Lords replied by passing Lord

[1] It would not have been in the least democratic if Lord Wemyss' suggestion had been adopted that a fixed number of peers should be elected by a number of important bodies, three by each. Lord Wemyss suggested twenty-one bodies on whom this right might be conferred. For example the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Royal Academy of Arts, the Society of Engineers, the Shipping Federation, the Employers' Parliamentary Council, the Liberty and Property Defence League, etc. (H. of L., April 25, 1910. *Parliamentary Debates*, Lords 1910, 5th Series, vol. v, p. 683).

[2] Not it would seem without considerable reluctance and under pressure from the agents of the party (Lord Newton, *Lord Lansdowne. A Biography*, pp. 385 sqq.).

Rosebery's? There was nothing to prevent the House of Commons rejecting a Bill not sufficiently democratic to satisfy the Liberal majority. Even those Ministers who were least disposed to destroy the House of Lords, were aware that the Radicals would accept nothing but a purely elective chamber.[1] But a Bill on these lines if it even passed the Commons, would certainly be rejected by the Lords. How was it possible under a bicameral system to escape an impasse of this kind unless the question of the relations between the two Houses were settled first? But how could they be settled by a Statute so long as the House of Lords retained an absolute veto on the legislation of the Lower House? By making use of the King's prerogative of creating on his ministers' advice a sufficient number of peers to change the majority in the House of Lords?[2] The increase in the number of peers had rendered this method extremely difficult. It would be necessary to create 500 new peers. And at first the Ministers themselves were sharply divided on the point. Finally, however, the Cabinet decided to ask the King to create them if the fear of seeing their order so cheapened did not make the more obstinate peers submit. 'If', Asquith declared, 'we do not find ourselves in a position to ensure that statutory effect shall be given to that policy in this Parliament, we shall then either resign our offices or recommend the dissolution of Parliament. Let me add this, that in no case will we recommend a dissolution except under such conditions as will secure that in the new Parliament the judgment of the people as expressed at the Elections will be carried into law.'[3] Reassured by this solemn pledge the Irish at last allowed the

[1] Sir Edward Grey, speech at the Hotel Cecil, March 14, 1910.

[2] We may mention as a curiosity another solution suggested by an Irish member. The actual issue of the writ of summons to the peers was part of the royal prerogative. What was there to prevent the King, on the advice of the Cabinet, from withholding writs from a sufficient number of peers to ensure a majority for the Government's Bill? (J. C. Swift MacNeill 'A Short Way with the House of Lords' *Fortnightly Review*, January 1, 1894, New Series, vol. lvii, pp. 1 sqq., especially pp. 6 sqq.), also a letter to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, *The Times*, April 1, 1907. King Edward was attracted for a moment by the idea (J. A. Spender and Cyril Asquith, *Life of Lord Oxford and Asquith*, vol. i, pp. 261–2) and a few months later he put it forward again in a modified form. Only those peers would be allowed to vote who were chosen by the leaders of the two great parties, fifty for either party. To these alone the writ of summons would be sent. (See the King's Conversation with Lord Crewe at Windsor, January 30, 1910 as reported by Sir Sidney Lee (*King Edward VII* . . . vol. ii, p. 695.) It would seem that in 1884 the Socialist Pankhurst contemplated the possibility that the House of Lords might be abolished by this indirect method. The Sovereign would no longer summon the peers and the House of Lords would therefore cease to exist. (E. Sylvia Pankhurst. *The Suffragette Movement*, pp. 81–2.)

[3] H. of C., April 14, 1910 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1910, 5th Series, vol. xvi, p. 1548).

Budget of 1909 to be passed with a few amendments of detail. By a ruthless use of the closure it was passed in ten days. By April 29 the business had been despatched and the recess began. It was when Parliament reassembled at the end of May that the dramatic struggle between the two Houses would reach its *dénouement*. If again the House of Lords refused to yield, it would be the King's turn to act.

But the unforeseen happened. The King, who had returned from Biarritz on the very day when the Commons passed the Budget, died on May 6. His health had been failing for many months and his entourage and himself were aware that the first illness might prove fatal. But the secret had been so well kept, and to the last moment he had performed his official duties with such zest that the public were taken by surprise. The English gave free rein to those feelings of national grief which always accompany an English monarch to his tomb. Journalists acclaimed in chorus with complete seriousness and without provoking a smile from their readers his political genius and even his private virtues. Had he not by his visits to all the rulers in Europe taken a prominent place in the history of his time? Was he not loved in France, hated in Germany, in both countries regarded as a great monarch? Had he not, moreover, possessed from his youth the reputation of a liberal prince, a friend of the popular cause? Unfortunately, much of this was legend. The part he had played in foreign policy had not perhaps been so important as was almost universally believed, and his Liberalism was certainly not as solid as it was said to be. As he grew older and became ill and tired his opinions became increasingly similar to those, sufficiently commonplace in all conscience, held by the clubmen among whom he lived, those people, we all know so well, who, completely ignorant of public affairs, lament every day as they puff at their fat cigars that the country is going to the dogs and declaim against what they are pleased to call the vulgar behaviour of the 'outsiders' who have forced their way into society.[1] As uncultivated as his mother, he

[1] In view of certain legends the judgment expressed by an important English review on the entourage of King Edward which appeared on the eve of his death is well worth quoting 'The King has many qualities, no one is more kind-hearted. He is a capital sportsman, and in foreign affairs he possesses a fine instinct which seldom leads him wrong. His very geniality and good fellowship deprives him of much of the awe with which the late Queen was regarded. His Majesty is a man of the world, going freely into society. But not even the most servile courtier could say that he has ever, whether as Prince or King, surrounded himself with men who are influential in either House of Parliament. Those who

did not possess, if the truth must be told, her grasp of political realities. And this had its good side. For the complaints with which he wearied his Ministers and of which they took little notice were less concerned with questions of general policy than with personal matters, appointments, and honours. For the rest, punctilious over points of etiquette and a past-master in the art of good fellowship, extremely conscientious in the performance of his ceremonial functions, delighted when his time-table was crowded with levees, openings, race meetings, dinners, visits to the opera or music hall, he was a model constitutional sovereign. But if all these things contributed to his popularity, here also there are reservations to be made. Though on the morrow of his death no one dare admit it publicly, he was too fond of the theatre and casino, too fond of travelling and visits abroad, too cosmopolitan, too 'European', to be the national monarch England would fain have possessed. In him the monarchy was honoured rather than the monarch. It would certainly not be very long before it was perceived how superficial his popularity had been.[1]

King George, who ascended the throne at the age of forty-five, had become heir unexpectedly in 1893 by the death of his elder brother. He had been brought up to be a sailor not a King. Like his father he was a great traveller, but he had not visited the watering-places and capitals of the Continent. He had opened the first Parliament of the Australian Commonwealth, had visited India, South Africa, and Canada. Because he had not been educated for the throne, he spoke foreign languages badly. English to

have shared his valuable counsels, may be the worst of men, as they are often among the pleasantest, but to the great political world they are unknown. With the doubtful exception of Lord Esher who has one of the sanest heads in Europe, none of those who constitute the entourage of the King count for anything in politics.' (*Contemporary Review*, May 1910, vol. xcvii, p. 517.)

[1] The authoritative work on King Edward is Sir Sidney Lee, *King Edward the Seventh. A Biography*, 2 vols., 1925–27. Edward Legge's two volumes *King Edward in his true Colours*, 1912 and *More about King Edward*, 1913 seem the work of a courtier dissatisfied with the tone, not sufficiently laudatory for his taste, of the article on King Edward in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, though it did not prevent the royal family entrusting its author, Sir Sidney Lee, with the task of writing the official biography of the dead monarch. They are a mere collection of anecdotes and give us little information. See also the study of King Edward by Lord Esher, who knew him intimately, in his book entitled, *The Influence of King Edward and Essays on other Subjects*, 1915 also H. E. Wortham, *The Delightful Profession: Edward VII. A Study in Kingship*, 1931. We may mention as a curiosity the speech delivered by Lord Haldane on December 14, 1907, in which in the course of a panegyric of King Edward he maintained that in England a constitutional monarch possessed a power of initiative not essentially different from that possessed by a so-called absolute monarch. The speech aroused the wrath of the Radical Press. But it seems to have been nothing but the fantastic expression of a metaphysician's dream.

the backbone and married to a Princess of the royal blood who was English by birth, he and his wife presented for the first time in England the spectacle of sovereigns who spoke English without a foreign accent, and in whose entourage more English was spoken than German. Strictly patriotic and strictly conservative, of middle-class tastes and habit, he was capable of decisive action. Whether, surrounded by his numerous children he were piously performing his religious duties, or reviewing with the competence of an old sailor the manœuvres of one of his fleets, or following amidst a huge crowd the fortunes of a football match, his unsophisticated feelings were shared by his people. He was in truth the imperial and insular monarch his subjects desired. He was better fitted than the late king to become one day the nation's darling.

2

When in October King Edward had held conversations with the leaders of the Opposition the Radical Press had suspected a desire to intervene in the conflict. Two months later when Asquith, stating his programme at a public meeting,[1] declared his resolve not to remain in office unless he could obtain the necessary assurances, the Unionist Press had accused him of putting pressure on the King to compel him, when the issue was joined, to support the Cabinet against the House of Lords. King Edward, there can be no doubt, dreaded the approach of that decisive moment, at a loss which course to adopt when faced with the choice between such formidable alternatives. Either he must refuse the request of a Cabinet supported by a majority of the Commons, and would be accused by the Radicals, as the House of Lords had been accused in December, of attempting a *coup d'état*. Or he would yield and be obliged to create such an enormous host of new peers to outvote the present majority in the Chamber that he would be accused and accused even by his own conscience of overthrowing and debasing the hereditary House and in the sequel perhaps of assisting the debasement and destruction of the hereditary monarchy itself. He died and his death barbed the denunciations of the Unionists. The insolence of the Radical Ministers, they said, had darkened his old age, perhaps even shortened his life. Were they

[1] Speech at the Albert Hall, December 10, 1909.

proposing to embarrass by conduct equally insolent the young sovereign who was a novice in the art of kingship? The Ministers seized this opportunity to postpone a crisis which some of them dreaded, Grey and Haldane and others besides. Every preparation had been made for the dissolution of Parliament in the event of a further conflict between the two Houses on the question of the House of Lords, its functions and prerogatives. The electoral campaign had practically begun. Funds had been collected, the list of candidates drawn up, and public meetings multiplied. Suddenly the Government suspended all these preparations and contented itself with raising to the peerage five great capitalists, in recompense apparently for the contributions they had just made to the Liberal party funds.[1] And the Ministers approached the leaders of the Opposition in the hope of discovering a compromise. When Parliament met again on June 8 Lord Rosebery announced in the Lords that he did not wish the House to proceed with the discussion of his resolutions. In scarcely-veiled language he gave it to be understood that he was taking this course at the request of the Government. It had been agreed that a conference should be formed, to consist of the principal representatives of the two opposing parties—four Unionists and four Liberals, the leaders of both parties in both Houses, with two other representatives of either party, among them Lloyd George. The Constitution just set up in South Africa had been the work of a conference sitting in private and containing representatives of the two hostile races so lately in arms against each other. To effect an amicable agreement between the two English political parties on the question of the relations between the two Houses would surely prove a less difficult feat. The Government's decision was in fact acclaimed by the mass of the nation. But the Labour members and the Irish Nationalists protested. They had been excluded from the Conference, which had therefore the appearance of an attempt by the two traditional parties to settle the crisis apart from the two groups whose recent appearance on the scene interfered with the normal operation of the Parliamentary machine. On June 30

[1] The printer Richard Knight Causton (Baron Southwark), the tea merchant Hudson Ewbanke Kearley (Baron Devonport), the cotton spinner William Henry Holland (Baron Rotherham), the shipbuilder Sir Christopher Furness (Baron Furness) and finally the king of Mexican petroleum, Sir Weetman Dickinson Pearson (Baron Cowdray of Midhurst). For the last of these see J. A. Spender, *Weetman Pearson First Viscount Cowdray 1856–1917*, 1930.

Lloyd George introduced after an inevitable delay, the Budget for the financial year 1910–11. The expenditure which it contemplated was enormous, almost reaching the figure of £200,000,000. But its new provisions were extremely simple so that the Irish had reason to fear that Parliament would pass it before the recess. In that case an autumn session might, if the Cabinet wished, be declared unnecessary. And since it soon became evident that the Conference was multiplying its sittings without any hope of reaching an immediate result, the Irish ran the risk that the Budget would be passed with the question of the House of Lords in suspense and they would therefore find themselves once more at the mercy of the Cabinet. But they were quickly reassured as to the Government's intentions. On July 29 before the Budget had passed its first reading the Prime Minister explained that since the Conference had not concluded its labours Parliament would suspend its sittings until November 12.

The Conference had held twelve meetings by this date. It met again on October 12 and held nine more, the last on October 21. They were private and the members were pledged to secrecy. But enough has been allowed to leak out to make it possible to guess the points on which the discussion turned.[1]

3

The first and most obvious suggestion which occurred to the members of the Conference was to employ for the permanent settlement of the question the same device to which the party leaders had recourse in holding it. Had not the resolution passed by the Commons in 1907 on the motion of Campbell-Bannerman provided for the election in the first instance by both Houses of a joint conference of ten or twenty members to attempt an amicable settlement of disputes? It is probable that the question of the composition of the 'Conference' or 'Joint Committee' gave rise to interminable discussion. If in the Conference the number of peers of either party were to be proportionate to its numbers in the House of Lords, the procedure would obviously give the Conservatives an unfair advantage, certain as they would be of a

[1] See *The Times*, November 16, 1910, February 28, 1911: Lord Newton, *Lord Lansdowne. A Biography*, pp. 395 sqq.—J. A. Spender and Cyril Asquith, *Life of Lord Oxford and Asquith*, vol. i, pp. 285 sqq.

majority in the Conference however overwhelming might be the Liberal majority in the Commons. If, on the contrary, the majority of Unionist peers in the Conference were reduced excessively, even eventually abolished, the Unionists would have reason to declare themselves duped. For a Government which had a majority in the Commons would be sure of a majority in the Conference.[1] It would seem however that it was on another point that the difficulties proved insurmountable. The representatives of the Opposition wanted a distinction made between three classes of Bills. The first of these would consist of Bills of the normal type, such as any Parliament is called upon to pass every year—Education Bills, Bills for the protection of labour. When Bills of this type were the subject of dispute between the two Houses the Conservative representatives were willing that the dispute should be submitted to the arbitration of a joint committee about whose composition an agreement would eventually be reached. As regards financial measures they agreed that the House of Lords should formally renounce the right to reject them, and were content to demand that the question whether or not a particular Bill was or was not exclusively financial should be decided by the committee. But there was another class of Bills for which, the Unionists claimed, a special procedure was necessary. They were measures which might be termed fundamental or constitutional laws—that is to say, laws which if Britain had possessed a written constitution would have formed part of it. At this point the question of a referendum was raised.

The referendum is an institution which originated and has flourished in Switzerland. When Switzerland had achieved its unification in the nineteenth century on a federal basis, some of its cantons were still faithful to the principle of pure democracy, the direct government of the people by the people. All the citizens met to discuss, reject, or accept the measures submitted to them. The other cantons which were governed by representative institutions progressively rendered them more democratic and devised an indirect method of returning to the system of direct democracy, by enacting that on the demand of a certain number of electors any measure passed by the legislative assembly of the

[1] See Charles Nicholson's plan (*The Times*, July 4, 22, 1910)—Of the hundred members of which the joint committee would consist fifty were to be elected by the House of Commons, to represent each party in proportion to its numerical strength, and fifty by the House of Lords of which one-half would be Unionists, the other Liberals.

canton must be submitted to the ratification of all the electors, and that the electors might even under certain prescribed conditions take the initiative and compel the assembly to discuss a particular measure; and the Federal Government followed the example of the cantons and adopted the referendum.[1] The institution had spread to the English-speaking countries. In the great republic of North America the procedure had been adopted in every State but one for the revision of constitutional laws. Two States had even granted the people the right to initiate legislation by petition.[2] And within the British Empire itself the new Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth had been based on the referendum. An alteration of the Constitution which had been passed by both Houses could not become law until it had been submitted to a referendum. And if it had been passed twice by one chamber and rejected twice by the other the Governor-General could settle the conflict by a direct appeal to the people.[3]

Advocated in 1907 by certain Radicals[4]—what institution had a more democratic appearance?—the referendum had been considered sympathetically in 1908 by Lord Rosebery's Committee of the House of Lords though in its report the Committee had refused to pronounce on a question 'which extended beyond the limits of its programme'. The suggestion had been put forward again in various quarters during the years 1907–1910.[5] It would

[1] *Miscellaneous No. 3* (1911) Reports from His Majesty's Representatives abroad respecting the Institution known as the *Referendum*, pp. 13 sqq., and *Miscellaneous No. 6* (1911) Report by His Majesty's Minister at Berne respecting the Institution known as the *Initiative* in Switzerland.

[2] See Bryce's Letter of April 18, 1910, printed in *Miscellaneous No. 3* (1911) Reports from His Majesty's Representatives abroad respecting the Institution known as the *Referendum*, pp. 3 sqq. Cf. S. R. Money, *The Referendum among the English. A Manual of Submissions to the People in the American States with an Introduction by M. St. Loe Strachey*, 1912.

[3] Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (*Imperial Act*, 63 & 64 Vict., Cap. 12, Sec. 128). For the application of the referendum not only in the Commonwealth but in the individual States see *Commonwealth of Australia. Papers with reference to the Referendum and its Working in Australia*, 1911 and *Commonwealth of Australia. Further Report with reference to the Referendum and its Working in Australia*, 1911. This very year Natal held a referendum on the question of entering the Union of South Africa (Natal—*Correspondence respecting an Act for a Referendum in Natal on the Draft South African Union Act*, 1910). And Queensland had just introduced the referendum under circumstances calculated to attract the attention of the English legislator (*Edinburgh Review*, No. 431, January 1910, Art. VII: 'The Referendum,' vol. ccxi, pp. 143–44).

[4] See in the *Speaker* for January 19, 1909, the scheme expounded by J. A. Nelson at the New Reform Club. See the same author's, *The Crisis of Liberalism. New Issues of Democracy*, 1909, pp. 32 sqq.

[5] On the Radical side by the *Nation* (February 26, 1910, Cf. G. Lowes Dickinson's letter in the issue of March 5). On the Unionist side by A. V. Dicey (The Referendum and its Critics. *Quarterly Review*, No. 423, April 1910, vol. ccxii, p. 538).

even appear that on the eve of the Lords' rejection of the Budget Asquith had played with the idea of introducing into Parliament a very short Bill, an emergency measure, which without making the referendum a permanent part of British constitutional machinery would submit the Budget of 1909 to the direct vote of the nation.[1] And again on April 28, 1910, in his last official letter to King Edward he informed the King that he was preparing a Bill to take in the last resort a referendum upon the proposed restriction of the Lords' prerogatives.[2] But it was undoubtedly the opposition of the Liberal members, headed by Asquith, which prevented the referendum being adopted by the Conference. Why did they object to it?

To understand their objection imagine that a Liberal Government had carried in the Commons a Bill which the Lords then threw out. What could the Government do under the existing system? Appeal to the country by dissolving Parliament and holding a General Election which amounted, no doubt, to a referendum on the particular Bill but at the same time, if the Government won at the polls, to a vote of confidence in the ministry, embracing its programme as a whole and the general character of its policy. What could the Government do under the same circumstances if the referendum existed? Invite the electorate not to return for their several constituencies the members of a new House of Commons but throughout the kingdom as a whole to decide for or against the measure in question. Suppose the referendum went against the Government. It would be still in office though definitely defeated. Not even a favourable General Election could make good the loss of authority it had sustained. The sovereignty of Parliament or rather of that executive committee of the Parliamentary majority which is the Cabinet would no longer be absolute. The government machine as the English had become accustomed to work it would be thrown completely out of gear.

But there was another and more immediate reason, a reason of

[1] *The Times*, October 12, 1909.

[2] Sir Sidney Lee, *King Edward VII* . . . vol. ii, p. 710. At the beginning of the following year when he introduced his Parliament Bill Asquith stated that he would not absolutely exclude the referendum which might be practicable in 'some exceptional case' but could not accept it as 'a normal part of our regular constitutional machine'. (H. of C., February 21, 1911. *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1911. 5th Series, vol. xxi, pp. 1750–51.) This amounted to an admission that he might have contemplated recourse to the referendum as an exceptional emergency measure.

political expediency rather than principle, which made it impossible for the Liberal ministers given the existing composition of Parliament to accept a referendum. The fundamental or constitutional law about which the Unionist Opposition felt certain that the mass of the electorate, however democratic on a host of other questions, would refuse to follow the demand of a democratic government for its repeal, was the law which at the opening of the nineteenth century effected a legislative union between Ireland and Great Britain. The eighty Nationalist members of the House of Commons were therefore inevitably hostile to the referendum. But since January they had been the cornerstone of the ministerial majority. They supported Government Bills in which they had no interest, to which indeed they were even strongly opposed, in return for the promise of a Home Rule Bill in the immediate future. But if that Bill even when passed by the House of Commons could be rejected by the direct vote of a hostile British electorate, their contract with the Government would be broken, and its majority would be destroyed by their secession. In the intention of those Unionists who advocated it, the referendum was simply a weapon to destroy that majority.

4

On November 10 an official communication informed the public that the Conference had failed to reach an agreement and on the following day Asquith visited King George at Sandringham. But the visit did not result in the expected announcement of an immediate dissolution. The King, it would seem, asked permission as his father had done the year before to approach first the Unionist leaders and Asquith had refused, whereupon the King refused Asquith's request for an immediate dissolution before Parliament reassembled, and the Parliament Bill was sent up to the Lords. In Unionist circles it was reported that Asquith, unable to carry his point, had tendered his resignation.

But he did not resign. On November 15, the day when Parliament reassembled, a Cabinet Council was held and Asquith had two interviews with Lord Knollys, one during, the other after the council. On the 16th the King, who had come up to London, received in audience the two leaders of the Liberal party and Lord

Knollys visited Asquith, while the King returned to Sandringham, fixing his final return to London for the 29th. The debates in Parliament throw sufficient light on what was happening. Lord Rosebery again moved his resolutions of the previous winter and the House of Lords announced its intention to proceed with their discussion, concurrently with the debate on the Parliament Bill which Lord Crewe reintroduced. But Lord Crewe let it be understood that he only did so for form's sake since after the failure of the Committee no compromise between the two parties seemed possible and the Government were resolved not to accept any amendment. Lord Lansdowne replied by embodying in a formal resolution the amendments to the Government Bill which the Opposition would propose. The Parliament Bill forbade the House of Lords to alter or amend a Money Bill and left it to the Speaker to decide whether or not a Bill belonged to this category. The Opposition wanted the question decided not by the Speaker but by a Joint Committee on which both Houses would be represented. The Parliament Bill provided that if in three successive sessions the House of Lords had thrice rejected a Bill passed by the Commons it would become law in spite of their rejection. The Opposition proposed that after two disagreements in the course of two successive sessions, the third time the two Houses should not vote separately but that, as was provided by the Constitution of several Colonies,[1] both Houses should hold a joint sitting to settle the question by a majority of votes and that in issues of exceptional gravity a referendum should be taken. But the Government allowed the House of Lords only an exceedingly brief period in which to pronounce upon these amendments. For even before Lord Lansdowne rose on November 16 to explain their character, Lord Crewe had announced a dissolution for the 28th 'acting on the supposition that the Lords would not accept the Parliament Bill'. That is to say, the King had given way and promised that if the electorate were consulted and the Election

[1] The Commonwealth of Australia in 1900, the Transvaal in 1906, the Orange River Colony in 1907, and the Union of South Africa whose constitution came into force at the very time when the British Parliament was discussing Lloyd George's Budget. In England where the Upper House was numerically almost equal to the Lower and almost wholly Conservative the system was obviously too favourable to the Conservative party. In the Dominions it produced no such effect. In Australia the Senate in virtue of its constitution was a less conservative body than the House of Representatives, and the operation of this particular piece of constitutional machinery produced results which seemed paradoxical. (Sir John A. Marriott, *The Mechanism of the Modern State*, vol. i, pp. 251–52.)

produced an adequate majority for the Government, he would carry out its wishes by putting pressure on the Lords.[1] The debates which ensued were lifeless, conducted before almost empty benches. No one thought of anything but the approaching Election. The essential portions of the Budget were passed and the remainder left over until the early months of the new Parliament before the financial year ended.

The Election was held in the first half of December only ten months after the last. The Unionist speakers everywhere brought Home Rule to the fore. Were the voters, they asked, prepared once again to place the majority in Parliament at the mercy of Redmond and his crew? Balfour, moreover, expressly declared that if the Unionists obtained a majority in the new House, they would not regard their victory as a mandate to restore Protection without having first submitted the question to a referendum. This piece of strategy won him a certain number of gains in Lancashire (a net gain of four seats in the borough and four in the county divisions). The Unionists also won two or three more seats in the South and West. But these gains were only just sufficient to balance the Liberal gains in the poorer districts of London and in the North of England. The Parliament returned in January had contained 273 Unionists. There were 272 in the Parliament elected in December. There had been 275 Liberal members in the late Parliament. There were 272 in the Parliament just elected. There were now 42 Labour members in place of 40; and 84 instead of 82 Nationalists. Obviously the parties had, after the abnormal Election of 1906, found their level in January 1910, for if the Liberals were, it would seem, mildly disappointed by these results (they had counted upon a gain of thirty seats),[2] the Unionists were equally disappointed by the stability of the ministerialist combination. And its solidity was the more remarkable because the Prime Minister had taken up the Unionist challenge, and placed Home Rule in the forefront of the programme which it would be the task of the new Parliament to carry out, once the question of the House of Lords had been settled.

[1] For the circumstances of this surrender see the debates H. of C., August 7 and 8, 1911, especially Asquith's speech of August 7. (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1911, 5th Series, vol. xxix, pp. 810–11.) Also Sir John Marriott 'The Crown and the Crisis' (*Fortnightly Review*, September 1911 n.s., vol. xc, pp. 448 sqq.).

[2] *Round Table* No. 9, December 1912, vol. iii, p. 104.

5

By relating the lively and often violent debates which occupied the two Houses from February until August 1911, the historian might easily give the impression that the struggle between the two parties had brought the country to the brink of revolution. Nothing could be more false. The agitation was only on the surface. The December Election had been surprisingly peaceful and half a million voters who had taken the trouble to poll in January decided to stay at home in December. In the eyes of the electorate, of the country as a whole, the question was settled. Without interest or passion the nation witnessed the sturdy efforts of the Conservative stalwarts to keep their flag flying to the last. On February 21 Asquith introduced in the Commons the Government's Parliament Bill. It was exactly the same as the Bill of the previous year. It passed the first reading on February 22 after two days' debate by a majority of 124, its second on March 2 after three days' debate by a majority of 125. When the clauses were debated the obstruction was so persistent that it could be overcome only by the Speaker's constant application of the closure. The debates which began on April 3 did not end until May 15 when the final voting yielded a majority of 121 votes for the Bill out of 603. By way of rejoinder as soon as the session opened the Conservative leader in the House of Lords, Lord Lansdowne, announced his intention to introduce a Bill to alter the composition of the House. And Lord Balfour of Burleigh with Lord Lansdowne's approval brought in a Bill to give the referendum a place in the British Constitution. On March 31 before Parliament rose for the Easter recess Lord Lansdowne carried in the Lords an address to the King asking him to permit the introduction of a Bill 'limiting the prerogative and powers of the Crown is so far as they related to the creation of peerages and to writs of summons'. On May 5 after the recess he introduced his Bill. The reformed House of Lords would consist of a hundred Lords of Parliament to be elected by their peers but who would be eligible only if they fulfilled certain conditions laid down in a schedule, 120 elected by the members of the House of Commons, grouped in a number of electoral districts, a hundred appointed by the King

on the advice of the Cabinet, in proportion to the respective strength of both parties in the Commons, seven spiritual Lords of Parliament, the two archbishops and five bishops elected by the episcopate, and finally sixteen peers who had occupied important judicial positions. With the exception of the archbishops, who would hold their seats so long as they occupied their sees, and the judges, who would hold their seats for life, every peer would hold his seat for twelve years. A quarter of the membership of the House would be elected every three years.

The Bill was certainly far more radical than the Bill Lord Rosebery had contemplated the year before, and far more than any of the Bills proposed by those who during the last forty years had sought to strengthen the House of Lords by rendering it more modern. So restricted was the field of choice that the hundred peers theoretically elected by their fellows would be of necessity those high officials, sailors, soldiers, Viceroys of India or retired Colonial Governors, for which former Bills had made a special place, and 220 of these new Lords of Parliament—that is to say, a large majority of their number, would be chosen more or less directly by the majority in the Commons. When Lord Lansdowne first spoke of introducing his Bill many Conservatives took alarm, and their alarm increased when its detailed provisions became known. One peer declared that he was willing to vote for the first reading but only on the understanding that he accepted nothing more than the general principle of a Bill whose clauses were open to such serious objections. Another declared that he could not even vote for the first reading. Why, asked Lord Rosebery, be so imprudent as to bring in a Bill instead of proceeding, as he had desired in 1910, by way of resolution? Dissension reigned in the Unionist camp between the diehards determined to defend at all costs the privileges of the Upper House as at present constituted, and those who to save it brought forward a measure more radical than the proposals of the Government. A Chamber which presented such a spectacle of internal strife was not in a favourable position to embark upon the discussion of the Parliament Bill.

But at the very moment when the final struggle seemed on the point of opening, the same thing occurred which had occurred the previous year. The warring parties concluded an armistice.

The Coronation was approaching. And an Imperial Conference was to meet in London. For a month the Houses of Parliament suspended their sittings and the parties their polemics. Much comment was aroused by a fancy dress ball given at one of the great London hotels during the Coronation festivities by F. E. Smith, the future Lord Birkenhead, a young Member of Parliament who for the past year both in the House and at public meetings had attracted attention by his brilliant rapier thrusts. The leading statesmen of both parties were invited. Asquith and Lord Lansdowne came and were chatting together when their host introduced another guest in the costume of a peer of the realm wearing a baron's mantle and coronet and on the coronet the number 499. He impersonated one of those 500 peers which the Government, it was said, intended, if necessary, to create to ensure the passing of its Bill. A peer wrote an anonymous letter to *The Times* protesting against such flippancy.[1] But we may wonder how many shared his indignation. In fact this fancy dress ball was a revelation. It brought home to the English themselves that the struggle between the parties was not after all so very serious and that the invective used by speakers in Parliament was often the violent language of barristers who, after abusing each other in court, walk down the street arm-in-arm. An Englishman excellently placed to observe the political drama from the wings was undoubtedly thinking of the ball at Claridges' when he noted in his diary on June 29 that 'both parties seem to be playing different parts in a carefully arranged masquerade'.[2]

[1] *The Times*, May 26, 1911. According to Jacques Bardoux the letter was written by Lord Rosebery: *L'Angleterre radicale. Essai de Psychologie Sociale (1906–1913)*, 1913, p. 207.

[2] Sir Almeric Fitzroy, June 29, 1911 (*Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 451). *The Times* had published the anonymous peer's letter of protest under the title 'A Political Masquerade'. See to the same effect the following reflections of a French witness: 'Every day the outcry is keyed to a higher pitch, abuse is followed by threats. "This is nothing short of a Revolution" we hear it said. But there is universal calm, not the calm which sometimes marks the eve of a cataclysm but the genuine calm of everyday life. More than that there is even a gaiety in the air and from time to time outbursts of laughter which mock the forebodings of storm treat the English revolution of to-morrow or the day after as the tail of a stray comet caught in the earth's atmosphere, and envisage the lists so solemnly opened between the Lords and the People, heredity and popular election, as a game of cricket played between a famous eleven and a rival team. If it did not involve the possibility of another General Election in May with its labour and expense, so soon after the January Election, the nation would be inclined to regard the battle as the most exciting sport of the season of 1911.' (Augustin Filon, 'La Chambre des Lords dans le Passé et dans l'Avenir'. *Revue des Deux Mondes*, May 1, 1911, vol. cdxxxii, pp. 101 sqq.)

6

The House of Lords had begun to debate the Parliament Bill sent up to it by the House of Commons six weeks earlier and had already passed its second reading before the Coronation. It did not reject it but was content to mutilate it by various amendments. It would not be for the Speaker to decide whether a Bill were or were not a Money Bill over which the Lords had no control but for a Joint Committee so constituted that Conservative influence would preponderate. And the Joint Committee was empowered to demand a referendum when for the third time the Houses had disagreed. Finally, Irish Home Rule was excluded from the scope of the measure. There were certain amendments, Lord Lansdowne declared on July 20, the day when the Bill passed its second reading, which his friends and himself would never renounce, so long as their liberty of action remained to them. His meaning was not doubtful and the last words presaged imminent defeat. For that very day Balfour received a letter from Asquith informing him that the amendments which the Lords had inserted in the Bill were unacceptable, that it would be sent back to the Lords in its original form and that if they refused to bow to the will of the Commons twice expressed, he would ask the King, with the certainty that his request would be granted (he had been sure of this ever since November 15 and the royal pledge had just been explicitly renewed) to make use of his prerogative to create the necessary number of peers to force the Bill through the Upper House.[1] At a large Unionist meeting held next day at Lansdowne House, the leaders of the party informed their followers that the hour of surrender had struck. Lord Lansdowne and Balfour had an audience with the King at His Majesty's request in which it would seem he begged them not to compel him by their obstinacy to take a step he loathed, and on July 23, the former with the support of Balfour and Lord Rosebery publicly advised the acceptance of the Bill. For this there was no need actually to vote for the Bill on the division but simply to abstain from voting against it. Two hundred and thirty Unionist peers promised to adopt this attitude.

[1] See J. A. Spender and C. Asquith, *Life of Lord Oxford and Asquith*, vol. i, pp. 329 sqq. Chap. xxv. Appendix. A list of 249 whom Asquith regarded as suitable persons to receive a peerage on this eventuality.

It was therefore with every prospect of success that on August 9 when the Parliament Bill was returned to the House of Lords unaltered except for a few very slight retouches, Lord Lansdowne explained the uselessness of further resistance and contented himself with expressing the hope that at some future date another Statute might restore the balance of the constitution.

But if Lord Lansdowne and Balfour had the support of the Northcliffe Press, which like themselves had in 1909 thrown in their lot with the belligerents after considerable hesitation, they were not conscious of a well-disciplined army at their back ready to obey their signal of retreat. In the *Observer* Garvin continued his noisy protests and the *Morning Post* preached resistance to the last ditch. In the Commons on July 22, the extremists of the Opposition by keeping up a persistent uproar prevented Asquith from obtaining a hearing. In the Lords, Lord Halsbury, who for the past month had been leader of the group known as the die-hards, became a hero in whose honour a banquet was given.[1] This opposition which divided the Opposition itself might prove formidable. If they mustered a hundred it would not be enough for Lord Lansdowne and his friends to abstain from voting if the Bill were to pass. Some of them would be obliged to go further and positively vote for a Bill they detested. This actually happened after scenes of tumult under the eyes of an indifferent nation. The Bill passed its third reading in the Lords on August 10 by 131 to 114 votes. This artificial majority rested on the votes of thirty-seven Unionist peers, the two archbishops, and eleven bishops.

7

Now that we must pass judgment on the reform, thus at last accomplished, we are conscious of a certain hesitation. We are too remote, we feel, from the event, yet too near it. For up to the present the Statute has never been put into operation and the Parliament Act, twenty years after it became law, cannot be regarded as a living element of the British Constitution. The British Parliament has passed an Act introducing universal suffrage (including the suffrage of women), an Act disestablishing the Church in

[1] For these final struggles see Alice Wilson Fox, *The Earl of Halsbury Lord High Chancellor (1823–1921)*, 1929, pp. 231 sqq.

Wales[1] and an Act granting Home Rule to Ireland without any need to make use of the provisions of this Act of 1911. Does this mean that the House of Lords suffered that year a more crushing defeat than was believed at the time and will never dare to employ the suspensory veto it was permitted to retain? It may be so. But on the other hand we know what exceptional events have during these twenty years diverted from its course the current of English history in common with that of the entire world. Who would dare to prophesy that the consequences of this upheaval will be permanent and that one day or another under circumstances we cannot anticipate, the Parliament Act will not recover its importance? In our uncertainty of the future we must endeavour to forget a past still too close in 1931 and by an effort of the imagination return in spirit to that summer of 1911 when the Parliament Bill had been passed at last by both Houses and enquire what impression the event produced at the time and what were its immediate results. It was obvious that, on one point at any rate, the British Constitution had ceased to be a Constitution resting on unwritten custom and had become a written Constitution, that the relations between the two Houses were henceforward defined, if not by a special 'constitutional' law which could be altered only by an exceptionally difficult process, at least by an express Statute whose terms were unambiguous, that this Statute established a supremacy of the House of Commons, absolute in matters of finance, almost absolute in all others and that the British political system was therefore on the way to become unicameral. But the Conservatives, the supporters of the Lords' check upon the Lower House were not slow to detect an advantage for themselves which no one it would seem had noticed.

In matters of finance, as we have just said, the Parliament Act seemed to render the Lower House omnipotent. The Opposition had in vain attempted to secure the reference to a joint Committee of both Houses of the question, whether or not a Bill passed by the Commons was strictly a Money Bill and as such exempt from the

[1] For greater accuracy we must add that, if it had not been for the war, the Act disestablishing the Church in Wales would have become law in 1914 against the will of the Upper House but that finally in 1919 an Act was passed in due form by both Houses postponing the date at which disestablishment should take effect and introducing certain amendments favourable to the Anglican clergy: 9 & 10 Geo. 5, Cap. 65: An Act to continue in office the Welsh Commissioners appointed under the Welsh Church Act, 1914, to postpone the date of disestablishment, and to make further provision with respect to the temporalities of, and marriages in, the Church in Wales (*Welsh Church* [*Temporalities*] *Act*, 1919).

control of the Lords. The Speaker elected by the House of Commons was to decide the question without appeal from his decision. The utmost that the Speaker, who was somewhat alarmed at the responsibility thus placed upon his shoulders, could obtain from the Government, when the Bill was discussed in the Commons for the last time at the end of July, was the annual appointment of two members of the House to act as his advisers.[1] But the position and functions of the Speaker in England, sanctioned as they were by the unanimous approval of public opinion, must not be confused with those of the president of a popular assembly on the Continent, a party member elected by a party. Once elected the Speaker, whatever the party to which he originally belonged and whatever party possesses the majority in the House, is always re-elected. In his constituency he will be returned unopposed. He is not a politician but a judge. In December 1911, when the Finance Bill passed by the Commons was about to be sent up to the Lords the Speaker decided with all the authority which attached to his decisions that in virtue of certain amendments which had been incorporated into it, the measure could no longer be regarded as a Money Bill within the meaning of the Parliament Act, in other words that the Lords were free to reject it.[2] Closely scanned, this decision affirmed by implication that the Budget of 1909 also had not been a Money Bill in the strict and legal sense, in other words that the House of Lords had not exceeded its competence in rejecting it.[3] To obviate the dangers the Government might incur as a result of this decision, the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared in 1913 that the Budget would consist of two portions, a Finance Bill which would simply renew, increase or reduce the annual taxes and a Revenue Bill containing all measures whose

[1] 1 & 2 Geo. 5, Cap. 13, *Sec.* 1(3): See on this point Lord Ullswater's reflections, *A Speaker's Commentaries*.

[2] In its original form the Parliament Bill forbade an amendment to be introduced into a Budget which in the Speaker's judgment would remove it from the category of a Money Bill. The prohibition was dropped in April (H. of C., April 11, 1911, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1911, 5th Series, vol. xxiv, pp. 387 sqq.), and it was this trifling victory which the Speaker's decision enabled the Conservatives to exploit. (H. of C., December 15, 1911, ibid., vol. xxxii, p. 2707.)

[3] This is expressly recognized by Lord Ullswater (The Speaker of 1911) in his memoirs. (*A Speaker's Commentaries*, vol. i, p. 103.) On what clauses of the Budget did he base his decision? Probably on some involving the regulation of the drink traffic, possibly on one which concerned the valuation of landed property. (H. of L., December 15, 1911, Lord Morley's speech, *Parl. Deb.*, Lords 1911, 5th Ser., vol. x, p. 1137.) T. M. Healy, *Letters and Leaders of my Day*, vol. ii, p. 507, insists on the difficulties with which the Government was faced during the session of 1912 in consequence of the Speaker's decision.

fiscal provisions affected the general legislation of the United Kingdom.[1] The former the Lords could not touch, the latter they could amend or reject as they thought fit. When in 1914 the Government could not find the necessary time to complete the discussion of the Revenue Bill, Lloyd George attempted to insert certain fiscal reforms in the Finance Bill. But he was recalled to order by the Speaker and found himself involved in inextricable difficulties[2]—that is to say, counter to all expectation it seemed on the eve of the Great War that, so far as financial measures were concerned, the Parliament Act might after all, have diminished instead of increasing the powers of the House of Commons. There was reason to wonder whether in some respects there had not been a return not only to the period before 1911 but to the period before 1861.

There remained the other part of the Bill which had monopolized public attention, the provisions which transformed the Lords' absolute veto into a suspensory veto. The duration of Parliament was reduced from seven to five years. If the Government maintained the old custom of dissolving Parliament a year before the expiration of its legal term, the Parliament elected in December 1910 would be dissolved at the end of 1914 at latest. The session of 1912 must therefore be devoted by the House of Commons to passing all the Statutes it was determined to force

[1] H. of C., April 23, 1913 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1913, vol. ii, p. 280)—The necessity to free the Budget from these non-financial provisions was the more urgent because the Conservatives had devised another expedient for obstructing the radical policy of employing taxation for purposes of social reform. Custom allowed many taxes to be levied by anticipation before the provisions of the Budget had been actually passed. A Member of Parliament of independent views, T. Gibson Bowles, brought a case before the Courts to test the legality of the practice. The judges decided that it was illegal. And the Government was obliged to pass a Bill which, while it legalized the practice, strictly limited the period within which the House of Commons must pass the Budget after the anticipatory collection of its taxes had begun. 3 Geo. 5, Cap. 3: An Act to give statutory effect for a limited period to resolutions varying or renewing taxation, and to make provision with respect to payments and deductions made on account of any temporary tax between the dates of the expiration and renewal of the tax (*Provisional Collection of Taxes Act*, 1913).

[2] H. of C., June 22, 1914 (*Parl. Deb.*, Commons 1914, 5th Ser., vol. lxiii, pp. 567 sqq.). June 29, 1914 (ibid., vol. lxiv, pp. 175–6). Cf. Sir Almeric Fitzroy, June 23: 'Lloyd George seems never at a loss for expedients to humiliate the Government of which he is a member. Lord Morley described Asquith as "writhing" under the indignity of the position in which he was placed last night when the Finance Minister had to take back half the Budget. How the officials of the Treasury could have been parties to the blunder passed Lord Morley's understanding. He thinks Lloyd George confuses them with a torrent of reasoning, the readiness and plausibility of which obscure the radical unsoundness. Lloyd George's sin is lack of concentration: the time that should be given to thinking out these high problems is frittered away in interruptions, now from this person, now from that—anybody in short, to whom he is accessible and these are legion.' (*Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 553.)

upon the Lords. After this, it would have only to wait and see whether three times, in 1912, 1913 and 1914, the House of Lords would throw out those Bills and in that case after the third rejection, give the Statutes rejected the force of law as though the Upper House had no existence.[1] But the question would still remain to what extent in the case of each of these Bills the House of Commons or the House of Lords represented the real opinion of the country, what risk therefore by thus deciding to brush aside the opposition of the Upper House, the former would incur, of arousing at the approaching Election a dangerous reaction of public opinion and how far it would shrink from running that risk. Time would show. A drama had begun whose *dénouement* was reserved for 1914.

III LLOYD GEORGE AND THE NATIONAL INSURANCE ACT

I

For the moment victory lay with the Liberal party and within the party it was the Prime Minister who had carried off the honours of the battle. It was he who had successfully conducted the struggle as a lawyer not as a demagogue and leaving to the Conservatives such unpractical novelties as the Reform of the House of Lords and the referendum, had presented his solution as fundamentally conservative, nothing more than the formulation in a written law of what, up till 1909, had always been regarded as the constitutional usage of the country in regard to the relations between the two Houses. Throughout the contest Lloyd George had been relegated to the second place. It was even rumoured that in the Committee of eight he had opposed to Asquith's scepticism an unexpected trust in methods of conciliation and had believed it possible to settle the question by an amicable agreement with the Unionist leaders.[2] Indeed, he had gone further and actually discussed with Balfour the formation of a Coalition Cabinet, with

[1] See however for certain difficulties as to the interpretation of the clause in the Parliament Bill providing that a Bill twice passed by the House of Commons should become law even after the Lords had thrown it out for the third time. Lord Ullswater, *A Speaker's Commentaries*, 1925, vol. i, pp. 112–5.

[2] W. F. Spender, *The Prime Minister*, 1920, p. 171.

or without Asquith, to settle on a non-party basis not only the question of the House of Lords but even the question of Home Rule, and perhaps to introduce some form of compulsory military service.[1] In short, this man of genius had been no longer the demagogue whose fiery denunciations of the Boer War, the Education Bill of 1902, and the Lords' opposition to the Budget were notorious. He had been the conciliator, the arbitrator whose skill had disarmed Unionist hostility during his occupation of the Board of Trade between 1906 and 1908. He had indeed failed. None the less he continued to gain ground at the expense of his real rival in the Cabinet. There can be no doubt that the fact that he was the scion of a noble family was a disadvantage rather than an advantage to Winston Churchill in the new epoch of English history now opening. He was not given a place in 1910 among the four Liberal representatives on the Joint Committee. His vanity, it is said, was hurt,[2] and the manner in which in 1911 he made use of the troops during some serious labour troubles damaged his popularity with the working class. Meanwhile, Lloyd George, leaving to the Premier the task of delivering the final assault upon a citadel admittedly doomed, returned to his role of social reformer.

When he introduced the Budget of 1911 he could congratulate himself on the success of his fiscal reforms of 1909. Thanks—as he confessed—to the years of prosperity through which trade was passing, the new sources of revenue instituted by the Budget of 1909 made sufficient provision for the constantly increasing expense of the navy and the social services. The cost of the old age pensions had risen from £9,790,000 to £12,415,000, more than double the amount originally contemplated by Asquith. Nevertheless, not only was the additional expenditure met, but the national debt was reduced at a rate certainly less rapid than during the first three years of Liberal government, but very rapid nevertheless. And Lloyd George was convinced that the taxes imposed in 1907 would also enable him to meet the increased expenditure he must expect in the ensuing years. In the first place, there were the navy estimates. But it might be hoped that in view of the

[1] W. F. Roch (*Mr. Lloyd George and the War*, 1920, p. 51). *The Times*, March 20, 1930: *Obituary Notice of Lord Balfour*. J. A. Spender and Cyril Asquith, *Life of Lord Oxford and Asquith*, vol. i, p. 287.

[2] Comte d'Haussonville '*Les élections et la situation politique en Angleterre*' (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, February 1, 1911, vol. cdxxxvii, p. 561).

great effort the Government had decided to make in 1909, these would not increase after 1912. Then there was the expenditure on the social services. An Act was passed during this session of 1911 to extend the operation of the Old Age Pensions' Act. And most important of all, Lloyd George carried an important measure of national insurance against sickness and unemployment. To be sure, Llewellyn Smith at the Board of Trade had been given ample time to prepare it. As early as 1909 Lloyd George had promised it and Llewellyn Smith was free to begin to work upon it as soon as he had given the finishing touches to the scheme of Labour Exchanges. In normal circumstances it would have been passed by Parliament in 1910. It was not the unreal and abstract question of the rights of the House of Lords but this Bill which from the beginning of May 1911 till the middle of December held the attention of Parliament and country, which had been kept waiting for it for two years.

2

In the important speech he delivered in the House of Commons on May 4, Lloyd George explained the nature of the risks against which the worker would be insured—death, sickness, and unemployment. So far as life insurance was concerned sufficient, it might well be thought, had been accomplished by private enterprise and there was no need for State intervention. In fact, forty-two million life-insurance policies had been issued in the United Kingdom. But it was not the same with insurance against sickness and unemployment. Not more than six to seven million were insured against sickness, and even so the trade unions provided only sick pay, not medical treatment. And only one million four hundred thousand were insured against unemployment, barely a third or a quarter of the hands employed in industries in which it was a constant threat. If, therefore, the workers were to be effectively insured against the double risk the State must intervene. That intervention must not take the form of unconditional grants —the system which England had just adopted in imitation of New Zealand—for old age pensions. Nor on the other hand must the State be content to make insurance compulsory for employer and employee without granting any financial aid, as Bismarck's Ger-

many had done in the case of insurance against sickness. They must adopt the system Bismarck had devised to insure the German worker against disablement and old age, the system of a triple contribution by the workers, the employers and the State. This general principle would be applied in the following fashion to provide insurance against sickness and invalidity on the one hand, and against unemployment on the other.

The German system of insurance against sickness distinguished five different classes of workers according to the rate of wages. In England there would be only one rate of contribution, 4d. a week for the employee, 3d. for the employer, and 2d. added by the State. The only distinction made would be to relieve of a part of the contribution workers whose daily wage did not exceed 2s. 6d. and that deduction would be greater when the wage was only 2s. or 1s. 6d.[1] The deduction would be charged to the employer and thus be an indirect penalty on underpayment. Medical treatment would be provided, the services of a midwife and maternity benefit, special treatment for tuberculosis, sick pay for a definite period beyond which insurance against sickness would be replaced by insurance against disablement, a species of anticipatory old age pension at the rate of 5s. a week. The contributions would be collected according to the German method, the employer being obliged, whenever he paid his wages to an employee, to attach to his book two stamps whose value was equal to his own and the employee's contribution. The administration of the Act, the management of the funds thus collected, and the disbursement of payments would be entrusted to the societies already in existence, sprung from private enterprise, which need only comply with certain prescribed conditions to be 'approved'. The benefits of the Act might but need not be extended to those who without working for a wage depended for a livelihood exclusively or principally upon their work and to those who having been subject to the provisions of the law ceased after a certain term of years to come within its scope, and who would be allowed to continue their contributions. But a measure intended to be universal must make provision for those who did not wish to be members of any approved society or whom none of these societies would admit

[1] For women the rate would be lower (8d. instead of 9d.). The employee would pay less, 3d. instead of 4d., the contributions by the employer and the State remaining the same.

to membership, an inferior class both in health and morals. For their benefit a special system was set up less advantageous to themselves, more completely a State service, and operated by the Post Office. According to the Government's estimate the total number of persons uninsured both compulsorily and optionally would amount to fifteen million. The first year the insurance would cost the employers £9,000,000 and the workers £11,000,000, a total of £20,000,000. The cost to the State, nothing in 1911–12, would be £1,743,000 in 1912–13, rise to £3,359,000 in 1913–14, and reach its maximum £4,563,000 in 1915–16.

This, so far as sickness and invalidity were concerned, was the system proposed. It was on a larger scale than the German. The numbers involved were larger, and the benefits given more considerable.[1] In dealing with unemployment they were tackling a question from which in spite of Bismarck's pledges the German legislature had recoiled, a problem indeed which no government on the face of the earth had hitherto grappled. There were no actuarial statistics on which legislation could be based, as in the case of sickness. It must therefore necessarily be experimental. The system proposed, at which the department had been at work for the last two years, would apply to begin with to certain industries described as the most 'precarious', those in which experience had proved that the periodical periods of unemployment were most acutely felt, the engineering trades on the one hand (engineering in the strict sense, shipbuilding, coachbuilding), the building trade on the other. In these two branches of industry the Bill provided for the compulsory payment of contributions by the employers and men (2½d. from either party), and a supplementary contribution by the State, to take the form of an annual payment of a sum equal to a third of the joint payment made by the employers and workmen. Relief would consist of a weekly payment to the unemployed man, 7s. a week in the engineering trades, 6s. in the building trade. The payment would begin from the second week of unemployment and could not be continued longer than fifteen weeks. The Labour Exchanges set up in 1909 would provide the machinery for operating the new law. The unemployed

[1] It was estimated that in the United Kingdom a third of the population would benefit by the new measure. In Germany not more than a fifth benefited by the provisions of Bismarck's legislation. (Alfred P. Hillier 'National Insurance and the Commonwealth' *Nineteenth Century*, No. 314, August 1911, vol. lxx, p. 342.)

workman must apply to the Labour Exchange which would offer him work. If he refused it, he must justify his refusal to the satisfaction of a committee of arbitration appointed for the purpose. If he made out a satisfactory case he would be entitled to receive benefit under the Act, which would include in its scope a sixth of the industrial population, some 2,400,000 workers.

It was estimated that the total cost of the new legislation during the first year, including the cost of building sanatoria for the treatment of consumption would amount to £24,500,000 of which £2,500,000 would come out of the taxes. In spite of this enormous outlay the Bill, as Lloyd George was careful to point out at the conclusion of his statement, must not be regarded as a complete cure for the evils against which they sought to insure the working class. To effect a radical cure they must, he said, cut deeper. The great merit of the Bill was 'to lay bare' a vast mass of social suffering and 'to force the State, as a State, to give its attention to it'. But as it stood, the Bill would alleviate a great deal of suffering. Nor did Lloyd George wish it to be regarded as the work of one party alone. Introduced as it was on the eve of the Coronation and the meeting of an Imperial Conference he expressed the hope that it would be passed by the unanimous vote of the House, though improved in the course of debate by the friendly collaboration of all parties. At the outset it seemed possible that his wish would be granted. At first sight the Bill appeared an imposing, a magnificent measure. And surely it would be to the interest of the Opposition to court the favour of the working-class voter by accepting with inevitable reservations a popular Bill? But it soon became clear that the Bill ran counter to many interests, disturbed many deep-rooted habits.

3

The workers, to whom all the earlier measures of social reform from the Education Act of 1870 to the Old Age Pensions Act of 1908 had consistently given something without asking for anything in exchange, were annoyed at the prospect of a tax imposed upon them by the State, and, except for the poorest, uniform in amount. Their annoyance found support from the theorists of

Socialism who asked for a measure which did not require any contribution from the worker. This was the position adopted by the indefatigable Philip Snowden, by Bernard Shaw, and by the entire Fabian group, which found itself for once in agreement with the exponents of orthodox Socialism against the moderates of the Labour party.[1] They pointed out that the new measure favoured those who because they were comparatively speaking well-to-do had already been able to insure themselves against sickness with the friendly societies. The others on the contrary, whose poverty entitled them to the Socialist's special sympathy, must content themselves with the ludicrously inadequate benefit given to the Post Office contributors. This group of critics also objected to the treatment the Bill accorded to women. Should they marry and cease to work outside their home, they would lose, unless they were left widows, the entire benefit of their contributions before marriage. Though they received the maternity benefit of thirty shillings, they could not receive in addition the sickness benefit, although the Bill forbade their employment for four weeks from the child's birth. In conclusion they blamed the measure for favouring unduly, in the administration of the insurance, the friendly societies at the expense of the trade unions. The former, or some of them at least, had been given a privileged position by that part of the Bill which dealt with unemployment. But what trade unions were in a position to fulfil the conditions necessary to become approved societies? In the first place out of 1,200 only twenty had a membership of over 10,000. And even these could not, without bringing their official activities to a standstill, accept the conditions prescribed by the Bill, the deposit with the Government of a sum equal to one pound per member, a pledge to devote all their funds to distributing benefit to their members, submission to the control of auditors appointed by the State, and even so, to be 'approved' only if they managed their finances on exactly the same lines as a friendly society pure and simple. Further, must the workers be treated by the doctors chosen by the 'approved societies'? This was indeed the intention of a measure which sought by that provision to prevent any fraudulent collusion

[1] H. of C., July 6, 1911. Philip Snowden's speech. Letter from Bernard Shaw to *The Times*. (*The Times*, October 22, 1911.) *The Fabian Society. The Insurance Bill and the Workers, Criticisms and Amendments of the National Insurance Bill. Prepared by the Executive Committee*, June 1911. *The Fabian Society. The National Insurance Bill*, October 1911. *The National Insurance Bill. A Criticism with a Preface by Mr. Bernard Shaw.*

between the insured and his doctor. But the workers revolted in advance against such bondage.

On this last point the grievances of the medical profession were the same as those of the working class. Doctors already employed by the friendly societies complained of unfair treatment at their hands. Would their position become the position of all doctors who attended working people under a measure which seemed to place the entire system of insurance against sickness under the societies' control. They wearied the nation with their complaints and finally drew up a statement of their demands which comprised the following six points. No insurance of persons in receipt of a wage of above £2 2s. a week. Free choice of doctor by the sick person. Medical assistance and midwifery to be withdrawn from the control of the friendly societies. The doctor's remuneration to be fixed in each area by the decision of the majority of doctors in that area. The profession to be represented on the bodies administering the law. The legal establishment in each locality of a distinct Committee composed entirely of doctors.

Both these oppositions, that of the workers and that of the medical profession, were formidable and it would be difficult to say which of the two caused the Government the more embarrassment. In their numerical strength the workers had indeed the advantage of the doctors. If they refused to pay their contributions, how could they be compelled to do so? But on the other hand their discontent failed to assume a definite shape. Their organizations both professional and political, the trade unions and the Labour party alike, when certain concessions had been made, declared their acceptance of the Government scheme, compulsory insurance, and contributions from the workers. The doctors' opposition seemed more dangerous and for months their powerful organization, the British Medical Association, threatened to sabotage the Bill. The Opposition in Parliament, at first friendly, could not resist making capital out of the discontent. At first Lloyd George seems to have hoped that the Bill could be passed in a few weeks. When at the beginning of June he perceived that a detailed discussion of the clauses was inevitable he clung to the hope that it might pass through all its stages before the end of August and that after eleven months of almost unbroken toil Parliament having passed the Parliament Bill, the Budget, and the

National Insurance Bill could be prorogued until January. The hope proved vain. When on August 18 the Parliament Bill became law, the Budget had not been passed and out of the eighty-seven clauses of which the National Insurance Bill consisted in its original form only seventeen had been carried and these not without serious amendment. An extraordinary session in the autumn was therefore inevitable. Meanwhile he would do his best to amend the Bill so as to satisfy all these divergent interests.

Laborious negotiations were therefore undertaken between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the organizations concerned. Such negotiations, unlike Parliamentary debates, are not recorded in writing. Nevertheless, they constitute what amounts to a novel form of parliamentarianism beyond and above the official Parliamentary government. The friendly societies raised unexpected difficulties. From the outset indeed sporadic complaints had been made by certain important societies of a Bill which it was said would inevitably transform them from free institutions into instruments of the State, fettered by bureaucratic control. However, on the whole the friendly societies had been satisfied with a Bill which gave them a position of such importance. But the Government was now obliged to do justice to the criticisms brought by the trade unions and above all by the medical body against the excessive favour shown to the societies, and every concession made to the trade unions or doctors increased the discontent of the latter until it in turn became formidable. To be complete we must mention another agitation, more comic perhaps than dangerous, but extremely vocal, especially in London. In its original form the Bill did not include domestic servants. Later on, the Government decided to extend its benefits to them. But many servants, particularly those in the employment of the wealthy, found the attentions of the law more unwelcome than beneficial. They listened to the advice of their masters who encouraged them to protest. Crowded meetings of domestic servants were held with ladies of title in the chair, to denounce the intolerable tyranny of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Were they—employers and servants alike, to be subjected to an odious system of red tape, doomed to pass their lives 'licking stamps'?

4

On October 21 Parliament reassembled. The Government declared that nineteen sittings should be sufficient to finish the discussion of the Bill. In the end two additional sittings were granted, twenty-one in all. That is to say the Bill was divided into a fixed number of 'compartments' and when the time allotted to the discussion of a particular compartment had been spent, all the clauses which the Commons had not had time to discuss would be passed automatically without debate. The Bill, now very considerably altered, comprised in its final form 115 clauses (not counting the schedules) instead of the eighty-seven of the original Bill. Not many changes were made in that portion of the Bill which dealt with unemployment. The amount of benefit was made uniform for both the branches of industry concerned and fixed at 7s. a week, and the age at which a worker might, under certain conditions, benefit by its provision was lowered from eighteen to sixteen. In the event Parliament had no time to debate these clauses, nor did the public raise any objection to this hasty procedure. The only portion of the Bill in which it was interested was that which dealt with sickness. On this point the Bill had been remodelled. Though on the one hand, to satisfy the farmers, the contributions due from employers and employees were reduced if the former continued to pay wages during illness, on the other hand the benefits given to the insured were increased. Insured women who subsequently married were enabled to benefit by the provisions of the law by entering the class of those optionally insured, and women in confinement might receive sickness allowance as well as maternity benefit, if they were insured individually as well as their husbands. The number of those eligible for benefit was increased. The wives and children of insured persons might use the sanatoria. And not only were domestic servants not excluded from the scope of the measure, but special provision was made for soldiers, sailors, and seamen in the merchant service. The conditions imposed on societies which desired to become 'approved' were modified so as no longer to exclude the trade unions,[1] and the friendly societies were obliged to accept still

[1] The unions however never gave their unqualified support. See on this point the views of an active trade unionist of extremely moderate opinion. 'Conferences were held and

further sacrifices to satisfy the grievances of the medical profession. To gauge the real importance of these concessions we must call attention to another aspect of the Insurance Bill, of fundamental importance.

It set up a small body of Insurance Commissioners furnished with very wide powers at once administrative, judicial, and legislative or, if you prefer, quasi-legislative. They were made responsible for the administration of the law, empowered to define its meaning by administrative regulations—which in very many instances must be regarded as supplementary laws—and judging, in most cases without appeal, infractions of the law. In strict logic the new service of sickness insurance should have been given to the local Government Board, but Lloyd George no doubt wished it to be an independent branch of administration in order to withdraw it from the influence, in his opinion sterilizing, of John Burns.[1] On November 28 the list of the first Commissioners was read in the House of Commons. At its head was Sir Robert Morant, who, driven from the Board of Education by a revolt of the elementary school teachers, exchanged one important administrative position for another. Subject to the Commissioners, the Bill set up Insurance Committees in every country and county borough. In the original form of the Bill as introduced in May they were called County Health Councils. Only a quarter of their members were appointed by the Government. The remaining three-quarters were to be elected, a third by the County Councils or County Borough Councils, a third by the 'approved societies' and a third by the Post Office Insurers, and in the original draft their sole function had been to do for those who paid their contributions into the Post Office what the approved societies did for the vast majority. But even then the Bill betrayed a tendency to extend their functions. With the assent of the friendly societies, they might take over the administration of medical assistance. This became compulsory in the remodelled text finally passed in November. The approved societies were to distribute the sickness allowance, the maternity benefit, and the disablement benefit, but

amendments tabled, some of which were carried. But ultimately there were embodied in the Bill, which was passed into an Act of Parliament, provisions which gave railway companies and other employers, as well as capitalistic insurance companies (whether of the "Friendly" type or otherwise) power to set up a society.' (G. W. Alcock, *Fifty Years of Railway Trade Unionism*, p. 419.)

[1] Sir Almeric Fitzroy, March 23, 1917 (*Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 646).

the entire administration of the medical benefit was entrusted to these administrative bodies, the local Insurance Committees, who were to draw up panels of doctors amongst whom the insured might choose. The composition of these committees was also modified. Only a fifth would be elected by the County Councils. Others would be nominated by the Insurance Commissioners, others appointed to represent the insured, and others elected by the medical corporation. And the Insurance Committees were empowered, in conjunction with the central Commissioners, if in their opinion the public health was being endangered by the insanitary condition of dwellings, by a tainted water supply, or failure to apply strictly the provisions of the Factory Acts, to exact a species of fine from the local authorities, to cover the exceptional expenditure which these agents of national insurance were therefore obliged to incur.[1]

The history of British institutions had witnessed a singular reversal of outlook. Formerly the English had prided themselves on having created the representative system to control the agents of the executive and restrict their action. They were now setting up a new bureaucracy to control their representative assemblies and compel them to act.

5

The National Insurance Bill passed its third reading in the Commons on December 6, after an amendment delaying its operation brought forward by the Opposition had been rejected by 320 to 223 votes. In the House of Lords it passed its second reading without a debate, after a speech by Lord Lansdowne, on December 11. The House of Commons having accepted a further number of small technical amendments introduced by the Lords, the Bill received the royal assent on December 16.[2] The House of Lords, in fact, was employing the tactics it had adopted in 1906, not to oppose a popular measure of social reform. But why in that case had it taken the bold step in 1909 of throwing out Lloyd George's Budget? It had provoked a crisis which had lasted for two years, had thrown the public finances into disorder, and had

[1] 1 & 2 Geo. 5, Cap. 55, *Sec.* 63.

[2] 1 & 2 Geo. 5, Cap. 55: An Act to provide for Insurance against Loss of Health and for the Prevention and Cure of Sickness and for Insurance against Unemployment and for purposes incidental thereto (*National Insurance Act*, 1911).

brought the political life of the country to a standstill to no purpose, and the final result had been that the country had made the peerage realize its weakness without even the compliment of hatred. The Budget for the current financial year was also hurried through without debate several months late. And on the very day, December 16, when the Budget, the Insurance Bill and several other measures jointly received the royal assent, Parliament was at last prorogued. After all the noisy agitation a feeling of weariness was felt throughout the country. But at first sight it did not seem likely to damage the position of the Cabinet. The ministry had emerged from the crisis victorious. Asquith had defeated the House of Lords. And Lloyd George had accomplished the feat of carrying in a single session a measure so bold and so complicated.

When he introduced the Bill on May 6 he was recovering from a disease of the throat which had kept him away from Parliament for several months and he had asked the indulgence of his audience should his strength fail him while he was speaking. But it did not fail him either that day or during the following months. Six days every week until the winter he worked fifteen or sixteen hours a day, hours occupied by conferences with the experts of the Treasury or the Board of Trade, or with representatives of the various classes of persons affected by the Bill—the doctors, the friendly societies, the trade unions. Even his hours of rest were not wasted. Luncheons and dinners could be employed for useful interviews. When in September he took a semblance of holiday in his native Wales, at Criccieth, he took his expert advisers with him. Add to this excessive pressure of work the fatigue of parliamentary sittings and the important speeches delivered from time to time at a public meeting.[1] When as Christmas approached, it was certain that he had gained the victory, even his enemies paid tribute to his genius. Never had he appeared so great.

6

Thanks to Lloyd George even more than to Asquith the Liberal party was victorious. And its victory was first and foremost a victory over the new Labour party whose rapid growth had

[1] Speech at Birmingham, June 10; at Whitefield's Tabernacle in London, October 14; at Bath, November 26.

alarmed many Liberals a few years earlier. Two causes about this date, 1910, contributed to its temporary eclipse.

The first, with which Lloyd George had nothing to do, was a decision of the courts. The employers, elated by their victory in the Lords in 1900—the Taff Vale decision—lost no time in launching a further attack. For they saw the workers preparing to take their revenge by using the Committee for Labour Representation to form at Westminster a class party closely dependent on the unions. Was this tolerable? Was it indeed lawful? Were not the unions exceeding the competence prescribed by their technical objects when they raised by a compulsory levy from their members' subscriptions the funds necessary to support a political party? As early as the beginning of 1906, even before the new Labour party had secured the passing of the Trade Disputes Bill, a miner in South Wales called Steele, with the financial support of the local Conservatives, brought an action against his union for making the levy without his consent. Meanwhile, the Trade Disputes Bill was debated in the House and the Labour members believed that owing to their efforts the measure had been so worded as to bar Steele's action. But the lawyers who worked for the Cabinet took care that reservations should be inserted into the clause intended to make such actions impossible, which actually gave it the opposite effect.[1] Steele's action was allowed. It is true he lost his case.[2] The statutes of his union provided for the levy of which he complained and the union had therefore the right to make it. But very shortly another rebel came forward, Osborne, a member of the railwaymen's union.[3] In view of Steele's defeat the court in which he first brought his action non suited him. He appealed against the decision. In November 1908

[1] Clause 4 (1) laid down: 'An action against a trade union, whether of workmen or masters or against any members or officials thereof on behalf of themselves and all other members of the trade union in respect of any tortious act alleged to have been committed by or on behalf of the trade union, shall not be entertained by any court.' But Clause 4 (2) went on to add: 'Nothing in this section shall offset the liability of the trustees of a trade union to be sued in the events provided for by the Trade Union Act, 1871, Sec. 9 except in respect of any tortious act committed by or on behalf of the union in contemplation or in furtherance of a trade dispute.'

[2] Steele v. South Wales Miners' Federation King's Bench Division, January 12, 1907.—A previous decision against Steele had been given by the Cardiff County Court on March 9, 1906.

[3] 'Liberally financed from capitalist sources' (S. and B. Webb, *History of Trade Unionism* Revised Edition 1920, p. 608). See however on this point Osborne's categorical denial (*Morning Post*, October 8, 1910—also *My Case*—pp. 23, 28). Cf. G. S. Alcock, *Fifty Years of Railway Trade Unionism*, 1922, pp. 338–40.

the judges of the Appeal Court unanimously reversed the decision of the inferior court. It was the turn of the union to appeal to the House of Lords. On December 21, 1909, five judges (among them a declared Radical, Lord Shaw) decided unanimously in Osborne's favour.[1]

They all agreed in pronouncing that the trade unions were entitled to the special privileges conferred by the Act only in so far as they did not overstep the functions attributed to them by the Acts of 1871 and 1875 and that the constitution of a political party was not among these. Two of the judges further argued that the formation of a political body ruled by the trade unions was opposed to the spirit of the British Constitution and subverted the foundations of representative government. It was in vain that the unions attempted by all kinds of shifts to elude the force of this decision; the law had the last word. Therefore, to defray the cost of electioneering campaigns and provide a salary for the members it returned, the party was obliged to depend on voluntary subscriptions which produced a most inadequate revenue. Under these circumstances until the day when a ministerialist majority would consent to a Statute restoring the right of which the Osborne judgment had deprived them, they were financially dependent upon the Liberal party.

Nor was this the sole cause of the Labour party's weakness. Another and more potent cause was the active policy of social reform pursued since 1908 by the two Radical leaders, Winston Churchill and Lloyd George. The Trade Disputes Bill of 1906 had been passed under the direct pressure of the unions. But this was not the case with the legislation which followed it. With the possible exception of the Old Age Pensions Bill it was the work of energetic statesmen—Churchill first, then Lloyd George—whose policy it was to anticipate the demands of the working class. How unenterprising and timid in comparison seemed those Labour

[1] Osborne v. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of England, Ireland, and Wales, Chancery Division, July 21, 1908—Supreme Court of Judicature. Court of Appeal November 16, 1908—Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants v. Osborne, House of Lords, December 21, 1909—Walter Osborne (of the Osborne Judgement) *My Case. The Cause and Effects of the Osborne Judgement*, 1910—W. V. Osborne (of the Osborne Judgement) *Sane Trade Unionism* (1913). This last brochure prints as an appendix the five opinions of the judges in the House of Lords—M. Beer, *Geschichte des Sozialismus in England*, 1913, pp. 489 sqq.—S. and B. Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism*. Revised Ed. 1920, pp. 608 sqq. (an extremely thorough and exhaustive criticism of the judgement)—G. D. H. Cole, *A Short History of the British Working Class Movement 1789–1927*, vol. iii, 1927, pp. 55 sqq. (He summarises and follows closely S. and B. Webb).

members who were the typical parliamentary representatives of British trade unionism—Henderson, Bowerman, Shackleton, Hodge, and Abraham! Not one of them had the imagination to pursue a policy so bold and so far-reaching in its scope and not one no doubt who would not have been alarmed had he been told that in the near future he must shoulder the responsibility of office. Their party lacked prestige at a moment when Lloyd George was raising the prestige of the Liberal party. Between the representatives of Labour and Lloyd George there was all the difference that there is between sleep and wakefulness or, if you prefer, between health and fever.

The Government majority had emerged from the Election of January 1910 greatly reduced; the Labour members and the Irish constituted its mainstay. We should therefore be inclined at first to wonder why the Labour members did not profit by this state of things to increase their influence in Parliament. The foregoing considerations explain why, on the contrary, their power declined. At the January Election unlike the Irish they lost a number of seats. Before the dissolution there were 44 Labour members, in the new Parliament only 40. In only twenty-six of the seventy-eight constituencies in which Labour put forward a candidate, did he oppose a Liberal and in not one of these was he returned. On the morrow of the Election Ramsay MacDonald stated plainly his desire for a coalition with the Liberals.[1] The party dared not adopt this policy and chose the policy of independence advocated by the veteran Keir Hardie. But when the new members had to choose their places at Westminster it became obvious how unreal this independence was. In 1906 the Irish and Labour members had taken their seats on the Opposition side of the House. Indeed, they had had little choice in the matter; the Government benches were so crowded. But now when they could choose freely, the Irish remained on the Opposition benches, whereas the Labour members preferred to sit on the Speaker's right. In the December Election Labour did indeed win two seats from the Liberals. But this was a pure accident. Never had the alliance between Labour and the Liberals been so close, and at no previous Election had the Labour party displayed so little activity.

[1] Interview with Ramsay MacDonald, *Christian Commonwealth*, February 2, 1910. See also Keir Hardie's reply at Newport on February 8 when he opened a special conference of the Labour party, summoned to discuss the Osborne decision.

In all they put forward no more than 58 candidates, and of these only 11 opposed a Liberal. It might well seem as though the hopes of those who at the opening of the century had dreamed of forming an independent party had been disappointed and the Labour party had resigned itself to being no more than a professional group dependent upon the Liberals.

7

Lloyd George had also triumphed over the Unionist party. It was his great Budget of 1909 which had provoked the crisis and the combination, heterogeneous as it was, of moderate and radical Liberals, Labour members, and Irish Nationalists which had supported him, had proved sufficiently solid to survive the test of two successive Elections. There was therefore no need to have recourse to tariff reform, to 'widen the basis of taxation', it was sufficient to apply the principles of the neo-Gladstonian Budgets, to defray, without imposing or increasing tariffs, both the growing burden of naval expenditure—for which Lloyd George blamed the Unionists—and of the Social services whose cost he expected to increase still further. And the proof of his victory was the dissension which prevailed among the Unionists.

For the uncompromising tariff reformers blamed Balfour for the Unionist defeat. In January 1910, under the banner of Tariff Reform they had very considerably reduced the Liberal majority, in fact, in England itself had transformed it into a minority. Their success should have been pushed further. But Balfour had preferred in December to relegate tariff reform to the background and concentrate on the question of Home Rule. What had he gained by this policy? In Yorkshire he had still further decreased the Unionist minorities. In Lancashire he had not gained so many as ten seats. Taking the country as a whole the result had been the *status quo*, and the House of Lords had suffered a decisive and humiliating defeat. The outcry became so violent that on November 8, 1911, Balfour resigned the leadership of the party. Who would take his place? Should it be Austen Chamberlain or Walter Long, the representative of the Balfourian tradition? To avoid the spectacle of a disputed election both candidates agreed to retire in favour of Bonar Law, a new man, little known to the

general public, a Canadian by birth and the son of a Presbyterian minister, who had made a fortune in the steel manufacture at Glasgow before he went into politics and had taken an active part in the propaganda for tariff reform. That a man of such antecedents could be unanimously chosen only nine years after Lord Salisbury's retirement to be the leader of the Conservative party is a proof, perhaps as significant in its way as the defeat of the House of Lords, of the speed with which British public life was becoming democratic. His difficulties began immediately. Should he ask for the taxation of foodstuffs? Should the composition of the British Budget be made subject to the decisions of an Imperial Conference? Was he bound by the pledge Balfour had given before the Election of December 1910 not to impose a protective tariff without a previous referendum? He could not answer any of these questions without offending either the stalwart disciples of Chamberlain who constituted the fighting wing of the party or those who would have nothing to do with a policy of dear bread and who represented from 60 to 70 per cent of the Unionist electorate. Now that he had become leader of the party, Bonar Law found himself obliged to be as cautious and hesitating on this point as Balfour had been and therefore equally incapable of arousing the enthusiasm of the masses. When he launched the programme of tariff reform a great statesman had attached a heavy weight to the neck of his party which it must bear for many a long day.

Hampered though they were by their official programme the Unionist party, despite their double defeat at the polls in 1910 and the apathy the electorate had displayed while the House of Lords was battling for its rights, were not without grounds for hope. The Irish Nationalists, arbiters of Parliament, would demand from the Cabinet their payment for two years' faithful support, the grant of Home Rule. It would therefore not be long before the Irish question would involve the Government in difficulties far more serious than those in which the question of tariff reform had placed the Opposition. Moreover, the subservience of the Labour party to the Liberals was arousing a lively discontent among the working class, which was openly displayed at the end of the year in their denunciations of the machinery set up by the Insurance Bill. The Unionist agents were preparing to turn this discontent to their advantage. And there was another question

which ever since 1906 the Unionists had exploited against the Liberals, still suspect of an attachment, unwarranted by the situation, to the traditions of Gladstonian pacifism—the German peril.

The tension between England and Germany had never been greater than at the opening of the year in which Lloyd George carried his great Budget. A semblance of calm had followed until in the summer of 1911 a serious diplomatic incident to which the name of Agadir has remained attached displayed the two countries on the brink of war. We must therefore turn from our study of English domestic politics, to the history of her foreign policy during these three years, so disturbed in both spheres. More than once we shall meet on our way the two great demagogues, the two leaders of the populace, Churchill and Lloyd George. In 1908 and 1909 both had been champions of peace at any price, though continuing nevertheless to make the inevitable concessions to the military party. In 1911 both went over to the war party, Churchill permanently, Lloyd George on a particular occasion, though his temporary change of front was equally significant. It was Lloyd George whom we shall see at the moment of crisis amazing England and Europe by employing in public against Germany the language of the most bellicose patriotism. This redoubtable figure was the hero of the hour. Thrusting his rivals into the background, he held the stage of his time and country.

CHAPTER III

From the Bosnian Crisis to the Crisis of Agadir

I THE AUSTRIAN ANNEXATION OF BOSNIA AND THE NAVAL SCARE OF 1909

I

THE passing of the new German law which hastened the speed at which old vessels should be replaced and ordered four large ironclads to be laid down every year until 1914 alarmed the British Government. And its alarm was the greater because the Reichstag had passed the new law amid scenes of enthusiasm, by an overwhelming majority and without debate. In 1900 the Government had with the utmost difficulty extorted the Reichstag's consent to its new programme of naval construction. Now on the contrary the party leaders had, it would seem, taken the initiative and forced the government departments to act. Have I said that the new naval law alarmed the British Government? It would perhaps be truer to say perplexed. For it left the Government embarrassed by the very success of that policy of *ententes* inaugurated in 1904 and persistently developed ever since. What in fact had the British Government in view when it embarked on this policy? Negatively, the Foreign Office sought to deter the German Government from its attempts to surround Britain with a cordon of hostile powers by proving how easily Britain could win over all those allies Germany hoped to array against her. But for the complete success of the policy, something more was necessary. It must achieve the *positive* result of awakening Germany to the dangers to which she was exposed in virtue of her Continental position, and making her pay more attention to her army and less to her navy, so that her statesmen would return to the principles which had governed German policy in the age of Bismarck, when exclusively occupied with Continental policy, Germany had abandoned to Great Britain, without a struggle, the empire of the seas. No such change of front was visible at present in Berlin. The German army estimates showed only a moderate increase. The naval estimates on the contrary rose

by leaps and bounds and during the first year in which the remodelled Liberal Cabinet was in office, the tension between the two navies and the two countries became greater than it had yet been.

In that remodelled Cabinet, indeed, the imperialists would seem to have gained ground at the expense of their opponents, since Asquith became Premier instead of Campbell-Bannerman and McKenna succeeded Lord Tweedmouth at the Admiralty with the avowed intention of speeding up naval construction. The spring and summer witnessed, in fact, a round of those visits from one ruler to another which had taken their place amongst the most important ceremonial of European diplomacy and could justly be claimed as a succession of triumphs, accessions of prestige, for the Foreign Office. In May, President Fallières came to London to be welcomed by the cheers of an enormous crowd. The pretext for his visit was the Franco-British exhibition opened a few days before and destined for the whole year to cement the new alliance between the two cultures. During the official speeches the English King spoke of 'a permanent *entente*', the French President of 'a closer *entente*'? between the two countries. More sensational was the King's visit next month to the Czar. It was the first time in history that a British sovereign had visited Russia. The two monarchs met on June 5 off Reval. The Czar recalled the agreement concluded the previous year between the two Governments, by which questions equally important for both nations had been settled. The King mentioned other questions which might in future be settled by the same methods. What were they? Clearly the reforms which must be imposed upon the Sultan to secure the better government of Macedonia. And it would seem that the conversations between Sir Charles Hardinge who accompanied the King and the Russian Foreign Minister, Isvolsky, did in fact achieve the feat of an Anglo-Russian agreement about the Balkans. Had not Sir Edward Grey during the negotiations which prepared the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 expressly declared his desire for such an understanding? From that meeting at Reval—followed in August by a visit of President Fallières to Petersburg—dates the expression Triple Entente[1] to denote the

[1] *National Review*, June 1908, vol. li, pp. 505–6: 'So far . . . there has been something wanting to complete and perfect the *entente cordiale*. So far as France's Russian ally and her British friend regard one another with suspicion . . . so long was the diplomatic position of all three Powers seriously complicated.' And the anonymous writer of the article con-

network of understandings between England and France, and England and Russia which, in the language of *The Times*, without being alliances 'may readily become the parents of alliances, should unjustifiable aggression by others ever render alliances necessary'.[1] Germany took alarm, and its extent was measured by the fall in the value of Government bonds on the Berlin Stock Exchange. And her fears were increased when on August 10, King Edward visited the Emperor of Austria at Ischl, after stopping *en route* at Cronberg just long enough for a short interview with William II.

Whatever the real subject of the conversations between Edward VII and Francis Joseph may have been, it is not surprising that this visit, the first paid by the English King to the Emperor of Austria, should have been interpreted by German opinion as the expression of a policy which aimed at breaking up the Triple Alliance after constructing the Triple Entente. But at this moment events occurred in eastern Europe—they had indeed already begun before the meeting at Ischl—which alarmed all the Foreign Offices, seemed at times to be bringing Europe to the brink of war, and which after a series of rapid vicissitudes finally enabled the German Government to achieve a striking diplomatic victory, and display to the entire world a strong Triple Alliance arrayed against a weak and disunited Triple Entente.

2

The first of these events was the Young-Turk revolution which broke out at Constantinople on July 23 after an insurrection which lasted three weeks. It was a military revolt led by a revolutionary committee whose headquarters were at Salonika. It was a movement whose causes were deep seated, so deep seated that they escaped the notice of superficial observers and the revolution took all the governments by surprise beginning with the diplomatic representatives of the Great Powers at Constantinople. But the occasion of the revolution, the incident which made it break

tinues under the heading 'A Triple Entente'. 'There is absolutely no reason whatsoever why Great Britain and Russia should not form as firm and faithful a friendship as Great Britain and France; and it is the duty of every patriotic Englishman to co-operate to that end. Once more King Edward has given the lead.' See also J. Ellis Barker 'The Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance' (*Nineteenth Century*, vol. lxiv, pp. 1, sqq.—July 1908); Ellis Barker throughout the article speaks of 'The Triple Entente'.

[1] *The Times*, June 11, 1908.

out at this precise date, July 1908, was undoubtedly the Reval meeting.

Let us recall the antecedents of that interview. Peace had been maintained in the East for ten years on the basis of a close understanding between Austria and Russia. Russia regarded the concession by the Porte in January 1908 of the Sandjak railway to the Austrian Prime Minister, Baron Aehrenthal, as a breach of this understanding. It was no doubt arguable that when she requested and obtained the concession Austria did not exceed her rights under the treaty of Berlin, but it was impossible to deny that at least it violated the spirit of the agreement between Austria and Russia. For Baron Von Aehrenthal's political aims were only too plain. By the construction of this railway, the Sandjak, a wedge of territory driven between Serbia and Montenegro, would become an Austrian zone of influence. Sooner or later the railway would be prolonged to Salonika and the old pan-German dream realized; Salonika would become a great German or Austro-German port. In Russia pan-Slavist opinion took alarm. Isvolsky, the architect of the agreement with England, sought to strengthen it by joint action of the two powers to force a system of reforms upon the Sultan. England by the mouth of Sir Edward Grey, demanded the setting up of a system of administrative autonomy in the Balkans under a governor chosen by an agreement between the Sultan and the Powers. Everyone believed and not without justification that at Reval Russia accepted the British proposal, possibly in return for certain concessions. What resource was left to the Turkish patriots? Could they count on Abdul Hamid to resist this first step towards the dismemberment of his empire? He was too weak and too corrupt. The malcontents rebelled, putting forward a programme at once democratic and patriotic. Compelling the Sultan to restore the constitution of 1876 they undertook the task of setting up in Turkey a system in which the Government was in the hands of a Chamber elected by the universal suffrage, not of all the Moslems alone, but of all the inhabitants of Turkey without distinction of race, language or creed. There would be no longer any reason to demand reforms, measures for protecting nationalities and faiths oppressed by the Turk. For there would no longer be oppressors and oppressed but fellow citizens on a footing of complete equality.

The immediate effect of this sensational revolution was

extremely favourable to England. Abdul Hamid's entire government had been in the pay of Germany. Within twenty-four hours all his pro-German counsellors were in prison and the German Ambassador, Baron Marschall, accustomed hitherto to use the language of a master, found himself beleaguered in his embassy by the hatred of the entire population. England, on the contrary, reaped an unexpected reward for the unpopularity she had incurred for so many years with the Sultan's Government by demanding a policy of reform. A new Ambassador, Sir Gerald Lowther, reached Constantinople on the very morrow of the revolution. He was embarrassed by the unrestrained enthusiasm with which he was greeted. Noel Buxton, the President of the Balkan Committee in London, and the unwearied champion of the peoples oppressed by the Turks, was equally disconcerted to find himself become overnight a Turkish national hero. Conservative and cautious Englishmen, not least the Ambassador himself, remained pessimistic and sceptical. How solid was the new system? And in any case what effect would the revolution produce in Egypt and India? But British opinion as a whole gave its confidence to the Young Turks and carried with it Sir Edward Grey, who thought that after all the best way to conciliate the Moslems of Egypt and India was to display openly and even advertise his sympathy with the experiment in reform on which the Moslems of Constantinople had embarked. Marschall consoled himself by reflecting that this new-born sympathy of the Turks for England was a 'natural' phenomenon, one of the infantile diseases of a nation adopting for the first time a Liberal constitution. Germany herself had suffered from the same malady before Bismarck cured her.[1]

Then a second event followed, a reply to the Young-Turk revolution, as that had been a reply to the meeting at Reval. On October 5 the Prince of Bulgaria declared himself the independent sovereign of Bulgaria and not only of Bulgaria in the strict sense, whose boundaries had been laid down by the Treaty of Berlin, but also of eastern Roumelia which after 1885 had remained nominally a Turkish province though the Prince of Bulgaria was its governor. And on October 7 the Austrian Government proclaimed the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina over which it

[1] Baron von Marschall to Prince von Bülow, September 4, 1908 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. XXV[II], pp. 622–3).

had exercised a protectorate since 1878. Though in either case no real change was effected and a status which had long existed in fact received the seal of official recognition, both acts involved a serious blow to the prestige of the new regime in Turkey, which Germany was reasonably suspected of having encouraged, if not actually engineered. The entire British Press without distinction of political allegiance expressed indignation and protested against this violation of international law. And naturally the indignation was still keener in Russia, which saw the policy of Mürzsteg violated more flagrantly, far more flagrantly than it had been in January by the Sandjak concession, since it was the treaty of Berlin itself which Austria was openly breaking. In Italy also, great indignation was felt and demonstrations hostile to Austria took place. An Austrian encroachment on the Adriatic coast was regarded as a violation of Italy's rights. And when that encroachment was effected without any previous understanding with a Power that was, or was supposed to be, Austria's ally, it must be regarded as a breach of the Triple Alliance. Was the Triple Entente not only to be knit closer but enlarged by the accession of Turkey and Italy? The event would prove far otherwise.

3

What did Russia claim? Compensation not for Turkey but for herself, particularly a free passage through the Dardanelles for her navy? What did England claim? Nothing for herself but compensation for Turkey whose honour had been seriously damaged. There was therefore no agreement between the policies of the two Powers, though both were indignant with Austria. It is true no doubt, that in 1907 Sir Edward Grey had informed the Russian Ambassador that the Foreign Office was no longer opposed in principle to the opening of the Dardanelles to Russian men-of-war. But the declaration had been confidential and by mutual consent the question of the Straits had been omitted both from the text of the agreement concluded in September 1907 and from the conversations at Reval in June 1908. Isvolsky however had not forgotten a declaration so invaluable for Russian foreign policy. Disclosures made by Baron Von Aehrenthal soon revealed that on the very morrow of Reval Isvolsky had approached him,

and attempted to restore the Balkan *entente* between Austria and Russia on the following basis. Austria was to have full sovereignty over Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia a free passage through the Dardanelles.[1] In Isvolsky's eyes Von Aehrenthal's crime was not the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina but that he had effected it so quickly that he had not had time to secure his part of the agreement. He was caught in the trap, compelled to admit that he had no objection to the annexation, and to beg from England the free passage of the Straits. But Sir Edward Grey was himself trapped, not daring either to refuse Russia what he had promised a year before to let her take, or to compel Young-Turkey to grant it.

We must add that Russia, which had no wish to abandon Bulgaria to the influence of Vienna, was quite willing to recognize her independence, even with the addition of Eastern Roumelia and to negotiate a direct agreement on the question between Ferdinand and the Porte. This, too, was unwelcome to England. But the Foreign Office had no desire to admit to the whole world that the policy of an understanding with Russia had broken down a year after the agreement, and three months after Reval. At Petersburg Sir Arthur Nicolson, without conceding to him what it was not in his power to concede, did his utmost to support Isvolsky against a hostile cabal. When in October Isvolsky visited London he had a splendid reception and Sir Edward Grey sought to find a formula by which he could make common cause with him against Von Aehrenthal. It would not be a revision of the Treaty of Berlin. This would have aroused too powerful appetites in Russia, too great alarm in England. It would be an unpretending conference of ambassadors which would sanction the double breach of the treaty by Bulgaria and by Austria, but would at the same time determine what recompense should be made to the Powers whose prestige or economic interests had suffered, Turkey and even Serbia.

This was little in comparison with Russia's desire. But it was too much for Austria and the Austrian Government soon perceived how strong a position it occupied. We must not imagine,

[1] See a private letter from the Baron Von Aehrenthal to Prince von Bülow, September 26, 1908: 'He (Isvolsky) assured me that he had not entered into any agreement with England on the question of the Straits. In showing myself ready to satisfy Russia's wishes on the point, I was influenced by the wider aim of detaching her from England' (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. i, pp. 99 sqq.).

as at the time Petersburg and all the capitals of Europe believed, that the Emperor William was behind the annexation of Bosnia. He was informed of Austria's decision only at the same time as the other Powers and in fact, owing to a mistake, not until twenty-four hours after the French President. At the moment he was extremely vexed by a step which bid fair to embroil him irretrievably with the Turks, and annoyed that Austria had failed to observe the decencies of behaviour between allies by consulting him first. And the German Press at first displayed annoyance. But Chancellor von Bülow, who was a more circumspect statesman and had moreover been informed in advance by the Austrian Government, decided to give Austria unreserved support and soon converted the Emperor and public opinion to his point of view. The struggle, therefore, quickly became a battle between Aehrenthal supported by the Emperor William and Isvolsky supported, though not without inevitable reservations, by Sir Edward Grey or, as they said in Vienna, by King Edward. For the King, if we may credit the gossip of court circles, was furious. Nothing had been said to him of the matter at Ischl. He had not been allowed to play on his return to England that part of European inquiry agent which he prided himself on filling so well.[1] The legend of 'King Edward's policy' made it easy to ascribe to his direct influence both the anti-Austrian attitude of the Foreign Office and the violent campaign in the British Press against the annexation of Bosnia. To the latter the Austrian Press replied with equal violence, and a coolness ensued between the two monarchs which lasted for months.[2] Before leaving Vienna in November for the embassy at Berlin, the English Ambassador, Sir Edward Goschen, received nothing short of a rating from the Austrian Prime Minister.[3] Such insolence would be inexplicable, if Aehrenthal had not already felt certain of victory.

Little by little the Young-Turk Government drew closer to the

[1] For the false reports which an Austrian journalist circulated in the German Press in August 1909 on the subject of Edward VII's attitude at Ischl, intended to excite German opinion against him, see Mensdorff's telegram from London, August 2, 1909, his report from London, August 19, 1909 and his private letters from London, November 12, 17, 1909 (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. ii, pp. 424–448 and 531, 545). That summer, King Edward attempted in vain to secure an invitation from the Emperor of Austria.

[2] Von Tschirschky to Prince von Bülow, December 16, 1908 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxvi, p. 340). Mensdorff—Despatch from London, November 3, 1908 (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. i, p. 372).

[3] Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey, November 5, 1908 (*British Documents* . . . vol. v, pp. 484–5). Wickham Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, vol. i, p. 293.

Teutonic powers. The integrity of the Ottoman Empire had less to fear from them. Russia and England were still the enemy. At the beginning of October Marschall watched with amusement Sir Gerald Lowther silent, depressed, and extremely embarrassed to know how to repay the enthusiasm shown for him.[1] After all, Turkey could accept the loss of these two provinces, already three-quarters lost for the past forty years, the more easily because Austria had offered from the very first to renounce in return the rights over the Sandjak given her by the Treaty of Berlin. Was it not indeed the necessity of evacuating the Sandjak which decided Aehrenthal to give some compensation to the *amour-propre* of the military party by annexing the two provinces? Let Austria guarantee the Moslems of Bosnia and Herzegovina their possessions and religious liberty, pay the Turkish Government an indemnity to compensate her for the state lands Turkey had possessed in the annexed provinces, and promise to conclude a favourable commercial treaty and abolish the capitulations. On these terms Turkey, the power principally concerned, would undoubtedly be willing to separate herself from the other powers and recognize the annexation without waiting for the meeting of the Congress or Conference. She actually took this step on February 26, 1909. It was all very well for the British Press to dwell on the importance of the concessions made by Austria and explain them by the anxiety of Vienna to put an end to the Turkish boycott of Austrian goods. This was untrue, or at least only partially true. The truth was that at Constantinople Austrian or Austro-German diplomacy was once more gaining the advantage over British.

4

At the very moment when it secured this triumph in the Levant, Teutonic policy gained an equally decisive victory in Paris. At first the Young-Turk revolution had favoured French influence at Constantinople as much as British. The Salonika revolutionaries had served their political apprenticeship in Paris, French was more familiar to them than English, and their philosophy was the offspring of French democracy rather than of

[1] Baron von Marschall to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, October 11, 1908 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxvi[1], p. 152).

English Liberalism. But if the French Ambassador at Constantinople, Constans, a former Prime Minister, prepared to make good use of their friendly feelings, his manner of doing so was not entirely satisfactory to his British colleague. He pursued a policy of financial co-operation between France and Germany which ill sorted with the policy of the Franco-Russian alliance and the Franco-British *entente* and he expressed himself on the subject with a frankness anything but diplomatic. The new English Ambassador who came from Morocco, where for several years he had worked zealously to defend French interests against the claims of Germany, was disconcerted by the novel situation in which he found himself on the Dardanelles and expressed the wish to be 'rid of the Frenchman'.[1] But he was not rid of him, and it was Constans' policy which found favour for the moment with the French Government. During the months which followed—the last months of Clémenceau's ministry—French policy was more pro-Austrian and pro-German than at any other time during the years which led up to the War.

France deliberately adopted an attitude of conciliation. She declared her conviction that the best way to prevent the Bosnian crisis leading to war was to satisfy, as far as possible, the claims of Austria. Possibly the French Ambassador in Vienna when he advised this policy cherished the hope of detaching Austria from Germany, and there can be no doubt that this was the unavowed purpose of the new British Ambassador in Vienna, Sir Fairfax Cartwright, who would have been sent to Berlin instead of to Vienna, if Berlin had not refused to accept a man whose hatred of Germany was so well known. But the intention of the Quai d'Orsay in making this attempt to adapt its policy as far as possible to Austrian interests, was different. Beyond a *rapprochement* with Austria it had a *rapprochement* with Germany in view.[2]

[1] Sir Gerald Lowther to Sir Edward Grey, August 11, 1908. '. . . It will be interesting to see how the German Ambassador is treated on his return. All his friends are now locked up and his position will be difficult. I wish there were a possibility of getting rid of the Frenchman.' (*British Documents* . . . vol. v, p. 265.)

[2] For this *rapprochement* between France and Germany in the Near East and the part played in it by the journalist, André Tardieu, and the minister, Pichon, see the note from Stemrich to von Bülow, September 29, 1908 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxiv, p. 333). Baron von der Lancken to Prince von Bülow, December 19, 1908 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . pp. 372–4). Von Schön to Prince von Bülow, October 10, 1908 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxvi, p. 145). A rumour, derived from a reliable source, was current in Vienna that Clémenceau himself at this moment had taken alarm at the prospect of finding himself involved, as a result of the policy favoured by Britain, in a war with Germany. (Private

During the forty years which followed the war of 1870 France pursued, if we neglect inevitable deviations, a fairly consistent policy. Squeezed between two powers of the first rank, England and Germany, she endeavoured to build up a colonial empire by the alternative favour of both. It was a difficult and a risky game to play but proved in the long run successful almost everywhere except in the Nile valley. In 1904 France had obtained from England a free hand in Morocco. At Tangier and Algeciras Germany had reminded her that this was not enough. French diplomacy was now trying to persuade Germany to acquiesce in, if not positively to favour, the extension of her influence in that country. On the spot where French and Germans were at loggerheads the difficulties were very great. But at Berlin the overtures of the Quai d'Orsay met with a more favourable reception. For on the one hand, the German Government was becoming every day more convinced that England would never allow her to gain a foothold on the coast of Morocco, and it would surely be worth while to save what could be saved of her influence and prestige in those regions by an agreement with France. And in the second place, there was an entire party in Germany who, from hatred for England rather than love of peace, entertained hopes of an eventual reconciliation with France. The Emperor was at the head of it and however odd the methods he employed at times, he had never lost sight of this goal.

Therefore, when during the last months of 1908 incidents occurred in Morocco which a few years before would have brought the West to the verge of war—Moulaï-Hafid's successful rising against the client of France, Abdul Aziz, and the episode of the six deserters from the Foreign Legion who took refuge at the German Consulate at Casablanca and were carried off from it by force, they were settled amicably. It was in vain that public opinion at Paris caught fire. And in vain that the British staff made plans for military operations to be undertaken in concert

Letter from Baron Von Aehrenthal to the Embassy at Berlin, December 15, 1908; *Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. i, pp. 602–03). See further on this point Baron Von Aehrenthal's earlier report of his interview with Isvolsky at Buchlau in September 1908 (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. i, pp. 91–92). In January 1909 Pichon suggested that common action should be taken by France, Germany, and England. Berlin rejected the suggestion. Stemrich's note for Von Schön, January 22, 1909 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxvi[II], pp. 191–92). Prince von Bülow to Von Tschirschky, February 6, 1909 (ibid., p. 197). Prince von Radolin to the Foreign Office February 18, 1909. (ibid. pp. 601–02). Prince von Radolin to the Foreign Office, February 19, 1909 (ibid., pp. 605–06.)

with France. Neither in Paris nor in Berlin was war desired by those in control of foreign policy, and the Casablanca incident had hardly been settled by referring it to The Hague Court of Arbitration when negotiations were begun and pushed forward with the utmost speed for an agreement between the two nations on the question of Morocco. It was signed on February 9, 1909. The French Government undertook 'not to put any obstacles in the way of German commercial and industrial interests' and the German Government in turn undertook not to stand in the way of 'the special political interests of France' and both Governments promised 'to give a share to each other's subjects in all undertakings for which a French or German firm might obtain a concession'.

By this recognition of her political interests in Morocco, France began to obtain her revenge not only for Tangier but also (though this was denied by the express wording of the agreement) for Algeciras. Alone among the powers of the Triple Entente, France reaped an advantage from the Bosnian crisis. In itself this was not calculated to give pleasure to Russia or England.[1] To cause anxiety to both was no doubt one of the objects the Wilhelmstrasse had in view in consenting to the agreement of February 9. But the English had further reasons for anxiety when they scrutinized the text of the agreement. For the real negotiations which had led up to its conclusion had taken place not between the two foreign offices but between the financiers and manufacturers of both countries. Between the lines of the text could be read an understanding in which Krupp and Schneider played an important part for a joint development not only of Morocco but the whole of North Africa, and joint action not only in North Africa but in Turkey. How could this be good news to the British finan-

[1] Sir Arthur Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey, March 1, 1909. 'French Ambassador communicated to-day fresh formula to Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, which the French Government suggest should be communicated to Belgrade by the Powers. Minister for Foreign Affairs took exception to several points in it. . . . Every country had a right to have aspirations, and perhaps in the future Servia might wish to have some frontier rectifications with Turkey and would not tie her hands in the way suggested. These were the chief objections which occurred to him on a first hasty reading. Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs is being much irritated against the French Government.' Also Sir Louis Mallet's minute: 'It is very clumsy of the French to be so persistent. . . . Inform Sir A. Nicolson that you concur with Mr. Isvolsky in thinking the French proposal objectionable.' (*British Documents* . . . vol. v, p. 645.) The Same to the Same, March 24, 1909: 'Algeciras had to be revenged, the "ring" broken through, and the Triple Entente dissipated. The Franco-German agreement was the first step; and France is a quarter of the way towards a fuller understanding with Germany.' (*British Documents* . . . vol. v, p. 736.)

ciers and industrialists? Sir Francis Bertie informed Sir Edward Grey on February 8 that in Constantinople the group of French financiers had just broken with the English financiers and reached an understanding with a German group.[1] And London was further alarmed when the tariff committee in the French Chamber of Deputies proposed a general increase of tariffs likely to injure British export trade. In public the British Government might declare its unreserved satisfaction at a Franco-German agreement which was a further guarantee of European peace. In private, Sir Edward Grey and Sir Charles Hardinge informed the representatives of the French Government that it occasioned them no small anxiety. France must not allow herself to be duped by the German advances. Other questions besides that of Morocco divided the two countries. Nor must she forget those difficult days when she had been glad to rely on England's friendship in her struggle with Germany. On no account must the *entente* be dissolved.

5

On February 9 the King and Queen of England accompanied by the Colonial Secretary, Lord Crewe, Field-Marshal Lord Grenfell, and Sir Charles Hardinge, visited the German Emperor in his capital. It was King Edward's first visit to Berlin after eight years on the throne. The visit had been promised the summer before to counteract the bad impression produced in Germany by the two royal meetings at Reval and Ischl. It was more necessary than ever in February after the months of diplomatic tension which had followed. The King had become an old man, his bronchial tubes were affected, and he was suffering from the effects of influenza. But it would have been disastrous to cancel his visit. So he came, braving in the depths of winter the rigours of the North German climate. During his visit his health grew worse; he had an attack of coughing followed by a fainting fit which alarmed his entourage. But he conformed to the exacting ceremonial of a spectacular official reception with a courage universally recognized.

It was not a pleasant visit. Edward VII was unpopular in Berlin

[1] Sir Francis Bertie to Sir Edward Grey, February 18, 1909. (*British Documents* . . . vol. v, p. 605).

and the police feared hostile demonstrations. These indeed did not occur, but the public gave him a frigid welcome. The personal relations between the two monarchs were worse than ever in consequence of an incident which the previous October had astonished and amused the whole of Europe. The *Daily Telegraph* published the text of the German Emperor's conversation with an English friend. In the course of the conversation William II recalled all the services he had rendered to England during the Boer War—military advice by which the British staff had profited, and diplomatic assistance when he had thwarted the attempts of Russia and France to draw him into an anti-English alliance. And his friendly attitude towards England was the more meritorious because the feeling of his entire people was hostile to her. Why did she respond to such generosity with nothing but ingratitude?[1] It was strange language and aroused universal indignation in Germany. It was distasteful both to those Germans who disliked England and blamed the Emperor for humbling himself before the great rival power and those friends of peace who wished to see the relations between the two countries improve and found themselves represented as hating England. In England the effect was even worse. The account, partly true, of what the Emperor had done to help England during the Boer War had an insulting air of patronage. Moreover, all Englishmen were aware that his naval policy was directly aimed at their country and well-informed persons knew that at this very moment the American Government at the request of the British was preventing the publication of a particular number of a certain review in which another conversation of the Emperor's was reported which was

[1] *Daily Telegraph*, November 28, 1908. The article described conversations between William and an English host during his visit the previous autumn. Already on the very morrow of the visit the Emperor's loquacity had caused anxiety to his Government. A Manchester paper, the *Daily Despatch*, had published a conversation of the Kaiser's with 'a diplomat of high station'. The sole object of his navy, the Emperor had said, was to assist the commercial and colonial expansion of Germany by increasing her prestige at sea. Germany entertained no designs of conquest in the direction of Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland or the Baltic provinces which were completely Russian. And in regard to England the sole desire of German statesmen was to maintain friendly relations with her. The German Ambassador in London published a denial. The Manchester *Daily Despatch* replied by proving from documentary evidence that the text of the conversation had been revised and corrected at the Embassy. The Germans replied by another and more involved denial whose sole object was to clear the Emperor. The *Daily Despatch* once more published a triumphant reply. It must be added that though the Emperor's conduct was regarded as incorrect in Berlin, and the Ambassador was therefore compelled to deny it and though the incident revealed differences of opinion between William and his chancellor, it attracted very little public attention. (*The Times*, December 4–6, 1907.)

one long diatribe against the English. William was obliged to make his excuses publicly and promise to abstain in future from utterances not previously approved by his ministers. It was therefore a monarch out of humour with himself, out of humour with his ministers, out of humour with his people, and above all out of humour with the entire British people and their King who bade the latter welcome.

One thing alone was calculated to diminish his ill humour and soften his bitter feelings towards his Chancellor, von Bülow, whom he had loathed since November—the brilliant success the latter had just achieved for German diplomacy and indirectly for the Emperor himself. The Franco-German agreement was signed on the very day Edward VII reached Berlin. The negotiations had been hastened so that the signature should not be delayed beyond that day at latest.[1] Everyone knew that the agreement between Austria and Turkey would be shortly concluded and Turkey accept the annexation of Bosnia without any interference by the Powers. Russia was isolated and humbled, and indirectly England. At this meeting in Berlin in February 1909, the conqueror on the battlefield of diplomacy was welcoming the conquered.

Immediately after the royal visit to Berlin, Sir Arthur Nicolson wrote from Petersburg to Sir Edward Grey. 'M. Isvolsky is seriously alarmed at the *communiqué* which has been telegraphed from Berlin as to what passed at the recent meeting. *Communiqué* states that in the Near East there is a complete understanding

[1] The Emperor William had wanted the agreement signed before Edward VII's arrival, but Jules Cambon who brought it from Paris bearing the signatures of the French ministers only reached Berlin on the 9th and his train came in after King Edward's. Immediately, without losing an hour, Von Schön received Cambon in audience and the agreement was signed. (Baron von Schön *Erlebtes. Beitrage zur politischen Geschichte der neuesten Zeit*, 1921, pp. 87–88. French trans., pp. 120–22). Cf. Von Kiderlen-Wächter to an anonymous correspondent, March 7, 1909: 'You will of course have read that we have concluded the Morocco agreement which is, I think, a good thing. Between ourselves I may say that we have carried it through entirely by ourselves with the French Ambassador, M. Cambon. And it's been a tough job.' Kiderlen continues: 'Here, as at Constantinople, it is with the French Ambassador that I get on best. The French I'm convinced really want peace. Our English friends, faithful to their old principles, would be none too distressed if we slaughtered each other on the Continent while they remained in their island to sell to the entire world. . . . It would be really too idiotic if we had a European war and slew hundreds of thousands for the sake of those Serbian swine.' (Ernst Jaeckh Kiderlen-Wächter der Staatsmann und Mench. *Briefwecsel und Nachlass*, 1924, vol. ii, pp. 24–25.) Admiral von Tirpitz to the Minister of Marine, May 6, 1909. '. . . In this dispute between Austria and Serbia England has tried to push France and Russia on. But most characteristically France has united with Germany to pour oil on the troubled waters. In any case an "isolated" England has not dared to go to war over the question.' (*Politische Dokuments*, vol. i, p. 151.)

between Great Britain and Germany. He says this means Great Britain has joined Germany and Austria in Near Eastern policy. France has come into better relations with Germany and Russia has been isolated. Simultaneously with this he learns, from information from a good source, which is confirmed by the threatening attitude towards Serbia, adopted both by Austrian and Hungarian Press, that Austria intends to present shortly an ultimatum to Serbia, which, if not obeyed, will be probably followed by a punitive expedition, or execution, as it is termed.'[1] For it was already apparent and became more evident still at the end of February, that the conclusion of the agreement between Austria and Turkey and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina had been directed not so much against Turkey as against Serbia, against the danger of a Bosnian insurrection, a possible echo of the Young-Turk revolution, perhaps fomented and certainly exploited by the pan-Serb agitators of Belgrade. Austria was arming, and the existence of a complete understanding between the Austrian and German Staffs was certain though the public did not know how far it had been actually carried. For at the proposal of the Austrian Field-Marshal, Conrad von Hötzendorf, a military convention had been concluded between the two staffs with the full approval of both Governments arranging for military assistance to be given to Austria, if a declaration of war by Austria upon Serbia were followed by a Russian declaration of war against Austria.[2] What would France do if Russia declared war? And what would England do if France were drawn into the war? All these possibilities were discussed at Berlin. For the first time, soldiers and diplomats saw rising above the horizon the storm-cloud of the world war.

British diplomacy sought to conjure this danger of war without damage to the prestige of England and the Triple Entente. Sir Edward Grey suggested joint action by the Powers at Vienna to discover what the demands of the Austrian Government were and transmit them to Belgrade, and accepting what he believed to be a proposal of the German Government, he proposed joint action

[1] Sir Arthur Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey, February 13, 1909 (*British Documents* . . . vol. v, p. 596).

[2] For the negotiation of this military convention between the two staffs see Field-Marshal Conrad von Hötzendorf's correspondence with Von Moltke (Feldmarschall Conrad von Hötzendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit, 1906–1918*, vol. i, pp. 379 sqq., 631 sqq); Von Tschirschky to Prince von Bülow, December 17, 1908; and the editor's explanatory note. (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxvii, pp. 342–44.)

at Belgrade to discover what concessions the Serbian Government was willing to make to Austria and to transmit them in turn to Vienna. He clung to the dream of ending the dispute by a conference which would give the settlement an international sanction. This was the very last thing Vienna or Berlin desired. They wanted Serbia isolated in face of Austria and yielding unconditionally to her demands. On March 22 the German Ambassador at Petersburg presented Isvolsky with what amounted to an ultimatum. He was called upon to give a plain reply to the question whether or not Russia recognized the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. An ambiguous answer would be interpreted as a refusal, events would take their course (in other words Austria would declare war on Serbia) and Isvolsky would be responsible for the consequences. A council of ministers summoned in haste lasted for nine hours at the end of which Isvolsky, without delaying to inform Paris or London, submitted to the German ultimatum and agreed to recognize the annexation of the two provinces. Deserted even by Russia, Serbia capitulated. A separate agreement was concluded between Russia and Turkey, by which the Russian Government freed Bulgaria from her debts to Turkey by renouncing certain annual payments due from Turkey to herself. Another agreement was signed between Montenegro and Austria, which with the consent of England and Italy released Montenegro from certain military obligations imposed upon her by the Treaty of Berlin. In themselves these arrangements were not unfavourable to the maintenance of peace. To the advantage of Austria in Bosnia, of Bulgaria in Eastern Roumelia, of Turkey in the Sandjak, of Montenegro farther to the south, systems of divided sovereignty had been swept away which for many years past had exasperated the political situation in the Balkans. But the Yugoslav problem in Austria was not solved, had indeed been made more difficult by the annexation of Bosnia; and on the other hand the Austrian and German Governments had done everything to make the settlements actually reached appear not so much guarantees of peace as a flaunting assertion of the military power of the two Teutonic empires. The German Government was conscious of having gained a triumph exactly parallel to the victory it had won four years earlier. In 1905 after a year of the Anglo-French *entente*, it had compelled Delcassé's resignation. In 1909, less than two years after the Anglo-Russian agreement, it

had humbled Isvolsky. He would indeed most probably have resigned, if his Government had not forbidden it, not wishing to give Austria and Germany the honour of a too striking victory and condemned him to endure for long months of helpless chafing the insolence of Viennese diplomacy. But sooner or later he would be obliged to retire. For it was in vain that he hunted about for a means of avenging his humiliation, engaging in further Balkan intrigues in concert with Italy. Everyone knew that he was in disgrace with his master, who had never liked England, and broken by a formidable opposition. Not only did the pan-Slavists refuse to forgive his final capitulation, but the reactionaries, the champions of an understanding with Germany, exploited his surrender to the disadvantage of the Liberal party, which supported the understanding with England.[1] And what was it that made possible these bloodless victories of Germany in the East and West alike? The fact that neither the French nor the Russian army counted for anything beside the German. The Russian army had been weakened and demoralized by two years of unsuccessful war followed by two years of revolution; the French by long years of political anarchy. The German army had no need of reinforcement. This masterpiece of military technique and discipline had, it would seem, been brought to the point of perfection by the contemporaries of Bismarck. Germany was free to devote every penny she could raise to the increase of her navy. It is not surprising that the struggle between the two navies, the English and the German, reached its apogee at the time of the diplomatic crisis provoked by the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

6

Still less shall we be surprised if we consider how intense that naval rivalry had become already during the years which preceded the crisis. We remember the anxiety which Germany's attitude at The Hague had caused the English pacifists. And we remember

[1] See Pourtalès' letter to Von Bülow written a year before, June 5, 1908. '. . . Herr Isvolsky remarked that he was the very last to underestimate the dangers of this campaign. But they must be looked for in domestic far more than in foreign politics. The outburst of jingoism and the unbridled language of the Press were symptoms that the revolution had not been completely suppressed. . . . The attack upon Germany was conducted almost exclusively by the radical organs. These advocated for domestic reasons a *rapprochement* with liberal England and a hostile attitude towards a Germany regarded as reactionary.' (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxvi[II], pp. 445–46.)

the new naval law introduced immediately afterwards by the German Government and the plan of naval construction it laid down for the following four years, every year from 1908 to 1911 four large battleships—ironclads or armoured cruisers—of the latest type. We can imagine the excitement which the correspondence between Lord Tweedmouth and the Emperor produced at that moment of all others. And we can well understand how, in certain quarters, at once expert and interested, it was decided that this was the right moment to put pressure on the Liberal Cabinet to alter its programme of naval construction. And the opportunity seemed all the more favourable because Campbell-Bannerman's illness and retirement and the subsequent remodelling of the Cabinet encouraged hopes that the policy of the Government would take a new direction and the imperialists be in the saddle once more.

These interested experts were the large firms who manufactured guns, armour plate, and ironclads and directly suffered from the Admiralty's policy of economy. Five-sixths of the construction and equipment of the navy were in the hands of private firms—hence the enormous wealth of the industry. A witness, writing just before the War, estimated the total capital of the seven largest armament firms at £34,000,000. Among these seven Cammell, Laird & Co. had a capital of £4,000,000, Vickers a capital of £8,500,000, and Armstrong, Whitworth & Co. a capital of £9,500,000. Never since the beginning of the century had the dividends of the last two firms been less than 10 per cent. An entire group of publicists whose activities were the more embarrassing for the ministers because they belonged to their party, denounced the power of these firms.[1]

Consider the composition of the boards of directors in these large firms. Naval engineers and naval officers were constantly entering the service of shipbuilding firms where promotion was more rapid and far more lucrative. Elswick had taken Sir William White from the Admiralty, and when he went back to it Sir Philip Watts, also a formal naval officer, took his place. Vickers & Maxim had taken Trevor Dawson from the army, Dunn from the navy.

From the boards of directors let us turn to the shareholders in these large armament firms. From the information published by

[1] G. H. Perris, *The War Traders, an Exposure*, 1913. He quotes *The Economist* for April 26, 1913, H. N. Brailsford, *The War of Steel and Gold, a Study of the Armed Peace*, 1914. J. T. Walton Newbold, *How Europe armed for War*, 1916.

a provincial paper in 1909 it appears that the shareholders of Armstrong & Whitworth included sixty peers, fifteen baronets, twenty knights, twenty officers of the army or navy, eight Members of Parliament, and eight journalists. And in 1913 a pamphleteer called attention to the presence among these shareholders of two Cabinet ministers and two members of the Opposition Front Bench. In all this, we must bear in mind, there is no question of corruption in the strict sense. We have to do with a society so constituted that a large number of the ruling class have a personal interest in the prosperity of large firms which in turn depend for their prosperity on Government orders and are the more flourishing the more abundant they are. And the circle of those who had, to use Bentham's phrase, a 'sinister' interest in a policy of large armaments was wider, far wider, than this. Armstrong & Vickers employed 120,000 workers at Newcastle-on-Tyne, a third of the entire population—that is to say, a large town was living on war or the preparation for it. To reduce armaments would be to condemn a portion of these men to unemployment. In recent years government orders had even from time to time been increased to help the country to surmount a period of depression.[1] It was a dangerous expedient. For when the crisis had passed they dared not throw on to the street the men for whom work had been artificially provided. This in turn produced a permanent conflict between the economic interests of these men and the political ideals they usually held. They would elect a Unionist, the champion of a large navy. Or, if from habit they elected a Liberal or a member of their own class, he could hardly put up a stiff resistance to a policy of naval construction which supplied his electorate with wages: least of all when unemployment was rife and British industry was passing through a slump as at the beginning of 1908.

The Admiralty had one good reason for choosing to have its ships built by private firms—the competition between them. According to current belief competition favoured technical improvement while reducing prices. At the end of the nineteenth

[1] 'In 1884 began that sinister form of unemployment relief administered henceforward at regular intervals by the Government in the form of Admiralty extravagance. A careful study of the technical and trade literature of the early 'eighties makes quite evident the influence on armament policy of bad trade in the shipping and engineering branches of industry. It was this that made possible the success of the naval agitation which would otherwise have broken in vain against the Radicalism of such centres as Birmingham, Sheffield, Tyneside, and Clydeside.' (J. T. Walton Newbold, *How Europe armed for War*, p. 26.)

century the Admiralty patronized in turn Armstrong and Vickers. But it was in vain that England remained the citadel of competition, one of the European countries in which industrial unification met with the most powerful opposition. Here too the tendency to amalgamation made itself felt and, it would seem, its operation was particularly evident in the armament industry. Sometimes two rival firms amalgamated—for example, Vickers, Son & Co. and Maxim Nordenfeldt of Birmingham in 1896. Or one firm absorbed another. The Clydebank Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. was absorbed by John Brown & Co. in 1898, and Napier of Govan by William Beardmore & Co. of Parkhead in 1901. Or the absorption might be only partial, one firm becoming the dependency of another, a fate which befell Beardmore & Co. a year after it had bought up Napier. Vickers bought half the shares and by lending money to the firm enabled it to set up on the Clyde the largest shipyards England had known. Or again, without the avowed formation of a cartel of the German type the co-operation between leading armament firms became so close that it amounted to partnership. Such was the 'indefinable' bond which from the opening of the twentieth century united Armstrong-Whitworth with Vickers, Son & Maxim. Two firms long hostile were now reconciled and strengthened by the support of the Nobel Trust. Thus a solid block of firms was constituted, capable between them of building, equipping, and arming an entire squadron. This powerful combine however did not even now include all the firms engaged in naval construction. We notice the formation of an opposition combine (Charles Cammell, John Brown, Laird Brothers, Thomas Firth, Fairfield Shipbuilding Co., Coventry Ordnance Works). It might have served the public interest by competing with the former syndicate for Admiralty orders. The competition between the two groups did not however take this form. They asked for more orders, enough to satisfy both.

7

At the beginning of 1906, Mulliner, Chairman of the Coventry Ordnance Company, called the attention of the Admiralty to the alarming extension of the Essen works and tried to convince the

department that its object was to intensify and accelerate naval construction. But the Admiralty refused to communicate these alarmist conjectures to the Cabinet. He then addressed himself with greater success to the Secretary for War, Haldane. But Haldane's insistence failed to overcome the opposition of his colleagues, who remained unmoved even by Tirpitz's statement in November that Germany was now building ships at a faster rate than England. Reduction of expenditure on preparations for war was one of the fundamental points of the programme on which the Liberals had been returned in 1906, and the ministers felt that to abandon it would amount to a surrender. But their hands were forced by an appeal to the leaders of the Opposition.[1]

On March 2, 1908, the Under-Secretary of State for the Admiralty, Edward Robertson, attempted to prove that a reduction of naval expenditure did not endanger the safety of the country and in particular did not involve the abandonment of the famous 'Two-Power Standard' to which appeal was always being made. Apart from ships of the pre-Dreadnought type (here the overwhelming numerical superiority of England was undisputed) England would possess in 1910 nine Dreadnoughts and three Cruisers of the Invincible type as against two French Dreadnoughts and Germany's four Dreadnoughts and two Invincibles —that is to say, a superiority of twelve to eight. Allowing for the possibility of accelerations in the German rate of construction, Germany might possess seven Dreadnoughts and three Invincibles by the end of 1910. If the two French vessels were added there would be twelve Dreadnoughts in the possession of the two powers to the English twelve. The Two-Power Standard would therefore be maintained. And the following week in reply to his critics, he proved that a year later England would once more have a positive advantage, would possess fourteen Dreadnoughts as against ten German and two French—that is to say, two large ironclads more than Germany and France combined. Then with the aid of facts supplied by Mulliner, Balfour, speaking after two or three Unionists of lesser importance, contested the official figures. Starting from the fact that the construction of the battleships laid down in the German programme began in June where-

[1] For the Mulliner episode see 'Mulliner's Diary' (*The Times*, January 3, 1910), also G. H. Perris, *The War Traders, an Exposure*, 1913, pp. 28 sqq.

as the construction of the British ships began six months later he sought to prove that though in January 1911 England would certainly possess twelve Dreadnoughts to Germany's nine, in the autumn of the same year, she would only possess twelve to Germany's thirteen. The Germans were building four Dreadnoughts a year, the British only two. 'Consequently the time is not only far distant, but imminent, when in regard to that particular type of vessel they will be, not our equal, but our superior.'[1] The Government, he said, was returning to the Two-Power Standard; it would be truer to say that it was being driven back to it by the attacks of the Opposition. In 1906 Campbell-Bannerman had attempted to escape from the onerous formula. Before applying it, he argued, we must consider which the other naval powers were, and after the Algeciras conference we were justified in doubting the likelihood of an alliance between France and Germany against England.[2] At once the Unionists were up in arms as though their own leaders the year before had not declared the standard obsolete. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister repeated his contention the following year: he was, he said, 'entirely in favour of the standard' but questioned whether it were still applicable 'supposing we were at any time to be in close alliance with the two Powers with the largest navies'.[3] In reply Balfour maintained not only that the British navy ought to be equal in number of ships to those 'of any other two powers' but further that it should have 'a margin of superiority' over the two.[4] A year later, when Campbell-Bannerman was already seriously ill, and Prime Minister in name alone, it was a modified form of Balfour's formula that Asquith defended when he asked for a navy strong enough to safeguard England 'against all contingencies that can reasonably enter into the calculations of statesmen'.[5] Eight months later, he allowed a Unionist speaker to draw from him the statement that England must possess 'a preponderance of 10 per cent over the combined strengths, in capital ships, of the two next

[1] H. of C., March 9, 1908 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxxv, p. 1181).
[2] H. of C., July 27, 1906 (ibid., vol. cxlii, p. 116).
[3] H. of C., March 5, 1907 (ibid., vol. clxx, pp. 673–4).
[4] H. of C., March 5, 1907 (ibid., vol. clxx, p. 676). It was word for word the doctrine which Arthur Lee had preached the previous year. 'The Two-Power Standard has always meant that, in the matter of efficient first-class battleships, we should have a reasonable margin of superiority over the two next strongest Powers combined and even if those two Powers should happen, at any time, to be our two best friends, the formula would none the less apply.' (*National Review*, April 1906, vol. xlvii, p. 919.)
[5] H. of C., March 2, 1908 (*Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., vol. clxxxv, p. 377).

strongest powers'.[1] As he still refused to see any inconsistency between this formula and the formula he had previously defended he was urged to be more explicit. Did he mean 'the two next strongest powers, whatever they may be, and wherever they may be situated?' Yes, he replied, 'under existing conditions and under all foreseeable circumstances'.[2] There was always the same ambiguity, due to the fact that neither on the Government nor on the Opposition benches did speakers express plainly what was at the back of their minds.

When Opposition speakers asked whether in applying the Two-Power Standard all the Powers were taken into account, they were thinking of the United States. Does this mean that they contemplated the possibility of war against an alliance between Germany and America? Certainly not. They explicitly stated that an eventuality of this kind was not the ground on which they founded their demand for a navy at least equal to the combined navies of two other Powers. And when a speaker on the ministerial benches said that his party was content with a navy capable of facing any 'probable' combination of two Powers, he meant that he was excluding America from his calculations. Was he then thinking of Germany and France? Presumably. But Campbell-Bannerman never said so in plain terms and he had good reason to regard such a combination as improbable. The truth of the matter was that while everybody spoke of two Powers, everybody was thinking only of one. England had returned to the situation in which she had been placed half a century before when she regulated the size of her navy with reference to the strength of the French navy alone. But it was now a more formidable navy which caused her anxiety—the German. Those who wanted account taken of the American fleet in applying the Two-Power Standard did so because they knew that the American navy was more modern and increasing more rapidly than the French—that is to say, they were really demanding for the British navy a more marked superiority over the German. Those who on the contrary would take account of the French navy alone were those who were content with a lower margin of superiority. According to the most optimistic calculations England in 1910 would possess as many capital ships

[1] H. of C., November 12, 1908 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxcvi, p. 560).
[2] H. of C., November 23, 1908 (ibid., pp. 1768–69).

as Germany and France together. But why? Because in 1910 France, if her programme of construction were carried out, would possess only two Dreadnoughts[1]—that is to say, this application of the Two-Power Standard would give England only two Dreadnoughts more than the German ten. That was not enough if England were to maintain her naval supremacy. What then did those want who wished to maintain this supremacy undisputed. Gradually, by a novel interpretation of the Two-Power Standard, they had come to demand no longer a navy equal (or superior by 10 per cent) to the two strongest foreign navies, but, what was a different thing altogether, a navy twice as strong in capital ships as the German. Or, employing a formula better calculated to impress the imagination of the public, they asked that for every Dreadnought Germany laid down, England should lay down two: 'two keels for one.'[2]

8

The great naval manœuvres held in the summer of 1908—the most formidable Europe had yet witnessed—were no doubt intended to reassure the public by bringing home to them the magnitude of England's provision for war. Two hundred and seventy ships took part with a total tonnage of 1,044,000 tons and close on 70,000 sailors. What in comparison were the sixty-two Ger-

[1] In point of fact France had no Dreadnoughts in 1910.

[2] 'Of course there is no question as to what John Bull will reply to this programme, be it little or big. He will say that he is sorry, but if it must be so he cannot help himself. . . . He wishes for nothing more than the maintenance of the *status quo*. He has no army to speak of; his only defence is his navy. The maintenance of its supremacy is for him a matter of life or death. . . . He simply says to himself: "What a bore! The two foremost nations in the world might surely find something better to do with their money than spend it in a breakneck, beggar-my-neighbour competition in warships. But if Germany insists, what must be must be." He will not take much heed of programmes on paper, but the moment the challenger lays down the keels of a new Dreadnought, he will lay down the keels of two.' (W. T. Stead, *Review of Reviews*, vol. xxxvi, December 1907, p. 555)—'It is recognized that command of the European Seas is an inflexible condition of our national security; how is this to be maintained? The "Two-Power Standard" is a good phrase, but it is by no means easy to define and exemplify in *material* and in *personnel*, in ships and guns and men. It is far easier, far clearer and infinitely more safe to adopt the simple standard, and avoiding "paper programmes" for every ship which our great rival builds, to build two of equal strength. Let Germany force the pace, but let England win the race. That is a pregnant phrase and a plain policy which every man of the British electorate can understand. Of any sound scheme of national or imperial defence, naval supremacy based upon the simple proportion of two to one is the vital essence.' (Lord Esher, *National Review*, May 1908. For the problem as it appeared at this date see Archibald Hurd, 'A British Two-Power Fleet,' *Nineteenth Century*, June 1908, vol. lxiii, pp. 485 sqq.

man ships which had just finished their annual manœuvres on the opposite coast of the North Sea? It was the first time that the recently formed Home Fleet had been mobilized and the trial proved successful without calling up the reserve or denuding the ports of the number of men required to carry on the ordinary work of naval bases. Sixty vessels were still left unused. It was in vain that to avoid wounding German susceptibilities the theme of the manœuvres was kept a strict secret. It was perfectly obvious that both in the Channel and in the North Sea the problem handled was to repel a foreign invasion or raid. One incident was the capture of Wick, the landing in that little town of a hostile force not to occupy it presumably but to obtain with the utmost possible speed all the information required and then to re-embark without interference. Inevitably public opinion, instead of being reassured by the magnitude of the British fleet, was alarmed by the success of the imaginary raid. And the alarm was increased a few weeks later when some local manœuvres off the mouth of the Tyne were interrupted by the appearance of a German torpedo boat. The Admiralty lavished explanations designed to calm the fears of the public. The torpedo boat was simply one of the vessels guarding the fishing fleet, it flew an international flag and had come only to take in a fresh supply of water. That was all very well. The peril of invasion was the staple topic of conversation all the same.

A weighty Conservative organ, the *Quarterly Review*, published an important article on the 'German Peril' couched in the language of panic,[1] which irritated the German Chancellor extremely. Such nervousness he considered unworthy of the British Press; it reminded him of France.[2] At the other end of the social scale in a

[1] *Quarterly Review*, July 1908 (vol. ccix, pp. 264 sqq.). See especially p. 291. 'We hold a quarter of the world. By what right do we hold it, if might be once invoked? White power can be the only solid basis of white dominion. If this be true, our huge pyramid is poised upon an apex. In the whole of the King's Dominions there are fewer white men than in Germany alone and we are increasing far more slowly than the Kaiser's subjects.' Also towards the end, p. 298 'Heedless Chauvinism will not avail us. Let us be quiet and prepare. Let us do nothing to hurry on a conflict. Let us not put ourselves in the wrong, as the French did in 1870. Above all, let us not despise our antagonists. The Germans, with all their faults, are a very great and patient people, formidable, not because of what is to be condemned in their modern characteristics, but because of what is excellent. Like them we must defend ourselves. Neither foreign alliances nor *ententes* will compensate in the end for any deficiency in our own strength.'

[2] Interview with Von Bülow by Sidney Whitman, *Standard*, September 14, 1908. See in the same number a leader which criticizes the interview. 'Prince Bülow affects to ignore them (the pan-German writers). He would do better if he could show that he is not, so far as the opportunity arises, playing, perhaps against his will and judgment, into their hand.'

Socialist weekly, the *Clarion*, a campaign on behalf of conscription conducted not only by Blatchford, whose patriotic attitude during the Boer War we have already noticed, but by Hyndman, the orthodox Marxist, caused a great stir. In all the leading papers a host of letters appeared denouncing the presence on the east coast of a host of German spies disguised as tourists or waiters.[1]

The question of accelerating the tempo of naval construction and the extent to which this should be done was the subject of heated debates in the Cabinet. In August Sir Edward Grey made a final desperate effort to persuade William II to build fewer ships so that England need not build so many. When King Edward on his way to Ischl paid a brief visit to the German Emperor at Cronberg, Grey gave the King two memoranda so drawn up that they could be handed directly to the Emperor. The King disliked the commission. He was aware that disarmament proposals made by a stronger to a weaker power are more likely to irritate than persuade. In the end he kept the memoranda in his pocket and the meeting passed off better because serious questions were avoided.[2] Edward VII confided the task of presenting the documents to Sir Charles Hardinge and his interview with the Emperor was stormy. The Kaiser disputed Sir Charles' figures, which, he said, were hardly consistent with the recent spectacle of 300 ships taking part in manœuvres. 'Cease to build or build more slowly,' Hardinge suggested. 'To do so', the Emperor answered, 'would be to defeat ourselves for this is a matter in which the national honour and prestige are at stake.' 'I looked him straight in the face', William wrote to the Chancellor in his account of the interview, 'and he blushed crimson. My frank language did not fail to produce its effect. That is the way in which we should speak to the English.'[3] But the Englishman on his side, writes in his report: 'I do not think it is to be regretted

[1] *The Times*, August 21, 1908, 'The Spy Mania.' The article protests against the scare which had assumed the proportions of an epidemic. See also *Contemporary Review*, January 1910: 'About German Spies,' vol. xcvii, p. 42. 'Such pernicious works of fiction have been positively pouring from the press for the last two years': 'The Invasion of 1910' —'The War Inevitable'—'The Swoop of the (Teutonic) Vulture'—'The Great Raid'— 'How the Germans took London: Forewarned Forearmed'—'The Invaders'—'The Story of the Coming War'—'While Britain Slept'—'A Story of Invasion that will stir Britain to its Depths.'

[2] Sir Sidney Lee, *King Edward VII*, vol. ii, pp. 614 sqq.

[3] William II to Prince von Bülow, August 13, 1908 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxiv, pp. 127–8).

that a clear exposition of the views of the Government on the subject of naval armaments has been placed before the Emperor and the German Government, since their reply offers a complete justification to Parliament and to the world at large for any counter-measures that His Majesty's Government may decide upon taking in the near future. Although it is to be regretted that the German Government have assumed such an uncompromising attitude . . . it is as well to know the worst and be prepared for it.'[1]

That the Cronberg interview exercised a decisive influence on the Cabinet's naval policy there can be no doubt. But the country might not have supported the Government's new policy if it had not been aroused at the beginning of October by the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and protracted the crisis which ensued. London thought Germany was behind the Austrian move. Vienna thought that England was plotting a naval demonstration in the Adriatic. Metternich retailed to his Government reports that General French and Sir John Fisher did not consider the moment unpropitious for a war between England and Germany,[2] and transmitted to Berlin an article from the *Standard* arguing in favour of a preventive war.[3] On November 23, Lord Roberts moved in the House of Lords a resolution calling upon the Government to adopt the military measures necessary to deter 'the most formidable foreign nation' from attempting to land an army on British soil and on the other hand 'in view of altered strategic conditions in the North Sea' to ask the Committee of Imperial Defence to re-examine the problem of possible invasion.[4] Two months later, a play of very mediocre quality called *An Englishman's Home*, enjoyed a long run at a London theatre. It

[1] Sir Charles Hardinge Memorandum of August 16, 1908 (*British Documents* . . . vol. vi, p. 188).

[2] Count Metternich to Prince von Bülow, December 1, 1908 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxvi[1]. p. 280).

[3] Prince von Bülow to Admiral von Tirpitz (*Politische Dokumente*, vol. i, p. 96). The article in question was probably the leader of November 18 which however did not say exactly what Metternich and Von Bülow read into it. We quote the most characteristic passage of this vigorous piece of writing: 'At this moment neither side dreams of using its navy in an aggressive attack on the other; but will that state of things continue? Will not keenness of competition develop into bitterness as the strain begins to tell; will not the temptation grow until it becomes overmastering, on one side or the other, to use the force that has been accumulated to strike the adversary a crushing blow?'

[4] H. of L., November 23, 1908 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxcvi, pp. 1679 sqq.). See especially in his speech pp. 1685–1696. The motion was carried but only when Lord Roberts had agreed to withdraw the second part which seemed too obviously aimed at Germany.

represented the house of a rich country gentleman in Essex where nothing was discussed except amusement and sport, or if politics were mentioned at all, it was only in reference to a general strike of Post Office employees which disagreeably affected all the members of the party. Suddenly the 'home' was surrounded by a strange army whose uniforms were taken at first for English. What army was it? The army of 'The Emperor of the North'. One of the heroes of the piece snatched a sporting rifle to defend himself and was shot on the spot for his breach of the laws of war. The Territorial Army came on the scene only to cover itself with ridicule. Finally, the regular army arrived and saved the situation but everyone knew that the ending was conventional and the dramatist's real attitude one of hopeless pessimism. At the same time a piece by Barrie was being acted in London, *What Every Woman Knows*. It became the current witticism to call the new play 'What Every German Knows'. It was an extremely effective piece of propaganda and yielded a host of recruits to the Territorial Army. The Government took it under its patronage and the Censor would not allow a parody to be put on the stage.

9

The primary object of this propaganda was to strengthen the army so as to provide against an invasion possible in spite of the fleet. But the nation's fundamental concern was still the navy. In March 1908 Asquith had expressly pledged himself to the construction in 1909 of a sufficient number of ships to prevent Germany having more Dreadnoughts than England at the end of 1911. In May the Cabinet at a secret meeting after violent debates in which the new First Lord of the Admiralty, McKenna, and Sir Edward Grey threatened to resign if their demands were not complied with, decided to lay down four Dreadnoughts in 1909 (as against two in 1908), and six if at the beginning of the year the situation were sufficiently grave to warrant that addition to the programme. The pessimists' predictions seemed justified in July when Krupp issued new bonds to the value of £2,000,000 and still more justified in November when it became known that orders were being given to the German shipyards six months be-

fore the publication of the naval estimates. The German Government through its Ambassador in London protested against these suspicions and Asquith himself took note in a speech of his protest.[1] But the British might well feel alarm. A nation which had twice taken Europe by surprise with her Dreadnoughts and Invincibles had reason to be afraid that Germany might retaliate in kind.

It was a day of triumph for Mulliner when on March 3, 1909, he was invited to lay his views before a meeting of the entire Cabinet. What action would the ministers take? Would they adopt the German plan, itself inspired by the system pursued in England at the close of the nineteenth century and commit Parliament for a term of years to a programme of naval construction? The Liberal Parliament was not in the humour for such committals. Would they have recourse to a loan to lighten the immediate burden of expenditure involved? The Radicals would have none of it. They wanted to make the taxpayer, the wealthy taxpayer in particular, feel the cost of a policy of armament. This was the explanation of the great Budget of 1909; on these terms, but only on these terms, would Lloyd George and Churchill and their followers agree to a more extensive programme of naval construction. How many Dreadnoughts then should be built? Four? Six? The Navy League and the entire Unionist party wanted eight. Their desire was gratified. It was decided to lay down four Dreadnoughts at once and four others later in the year if circumstances demanded it. Finally, Parliament sanctioned the construction of eight Dreadnoughts in two relays. All were to be launched and equipped by the end of March 1912. On both occasions less than a hundred members voted against the programme, Nationalists, Labour members, and a handful of Liberals. After three years of Radical Government the supporters of armament to the teeth had triumphed.[2]

The enemies of Liberal pacifism were to gain yet another victory. The Second Peace Conference held at The Hague in 1907 had at least reached one important decision. According to the established usage in wartime, the prize courts were national tribunals each applying its own rules and, as everything led one to suppose,

[1] H. of C., March 16, 1909 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 1909, 5th Series, vol. ii, p. 960).

[2] For the Naval Scare of 1909 see F. W. Hurst, *The Six Panics and other Essays*, 1913, pp. 62 sqq.

their judgments were determined by the interests of the nation to which the judges belonged. In future there would be an international prize court to decide all disputed cases in the event of war. But this international tribunal, which would it was hoped be supernational, must apply a definite code of naval warfare. An international naval conference sat in London from December 4, 1908, to February 26, 1909, and drew up a declaration known as the Declaration of London which seemed in many respects to constitute a notable improvement upon the Declaration of Paris of 1856. It was no slight gain that three lists were compiled of objects unconditionally contraband, objects which might be declared contraband under particular circumstances and objects which under no circumstances might be regarded as contraband.

It remained to ratify the declaration. This would be done by the King on his ministers' advice without any previous debate in Parliament. But on the one hand the Government had given it to be understood that if the House of Commons decided against the Declaration of London it would not advise the King to ratify it. On the other hand the declaration was bound up with the establishment of an International Prize Court, and English participation in the court would require an Act of Parliament. Lively debates took place in the House of Commons on April 7. Sir Edward Grey promised that the House should have entire liberty to discuss the Declaration of London. Which party would prevail in the debate? It was to England's interest as a neutral power that merchantmen should be protected against the seizure of their goods by belligerent vessels. But in the spring of 1909 who could believe that England would be neutral in the next war? It would no doubt be to England's advantage as a belligerent if neutral ships could maintain her food supply with impunity. But her real interest demanded that she should count for her food supply upon her enormous mercantile marine, protected by her huge navy, which would take the opportunity furnished by the war to bring the commerce of all other nations, belligerent or neutral, to a standstill. An entire session, crowded as we already know with other business, passed before the House of Commons was free to deal with the question. And the following year both matters, the Naval Prizes Bill and the Declaration of London, were allowed to drop. The Bill did not even reach a second reading. The party

opposed to internationalizing the code of naval warfare and granting greater freedom to neutral commerce finally won the day.

The incidents which led a few months later to the fall of the First Sea Lord are more obscure and more difficult to interpret. In July 1908 the Press learnt that Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, Commander of the Channel Squadron, had given two of his ships orders which, it was alleged, would have produced a catastrophe if one of the officers had not taken it on himself to disobey them. Immediate publicity was given to the act of splendid insubordination for which Sir John Fisher accepted the responsibility. It was in vain that Lord Charles demanded an inquiry. Not only was the demand refused but he was informed that the period of his command would be reduced from three to two years. Retired from the service on March 24, 1909, he was received by a cheering crowd at Dover first, then in London and launched a savage campaign both in the Press and in Parliament against Fisher's policy.[1] He told stories and got his friends to tell stories of the measures to which Fisher resorted against any members of the high command whose ideas differed from his own.[2] He criticized the new methods of training officers. He denounced as a sham the pledge Fisher had given to Parliament to provide a stronger fleet with fewer men, fewer ships and at a lower cost. He condemned the Dreadnought policy which had played into the hands of Germany by leading England to concentrate her entire strength in home waters and neglect to build not only those light cruisers required to protect British commerce on the high seas but even the torpedo-boat destroyers without which her giant ironclads were exposed to the risk of sudden destruction. He protested against the absence of any plan of campaign. If war broke out were they to be at the mercy of the First Sea Lord or, even worse, left to the rival improvisations of the First Sea Lord

[1] Lord Charles Beresford's arguments will be found collected in the book he published at the beginning of 1912 entitled: *The Betrayal. Being a Record of Facts concerning Naval Policy and Administration from the Year 1902 to the Present Time.* The *Memories of Admiral Lord Charles Beresford Written by Himself*, 1914, contain a handsome acknowledgment of the improvements in naval methods effected by Fisher when in command of the Mediterranean squadron but are silent as to the quarrel between the two Admirals.

[2] For the Bacon episode see Sir George Armstrong's speech at the Constitutional Club on April 2, 1909 and the debates in the Commons, April 6, May 5, 19, 24 and 27, 1909 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1909, 5th Series, vol. iii, pp. 919, 1132; vol. iv, pp. 1032 sqq.; vol. v, pp. 383 sqq., 821 sqq., 1378) and in defence of Bacon his biography of Lord Fisher, vol. ii, pp. 111 sqq.

and the Commander of the Fleet? The navy should be provided with a general staff like that with which Haldane had equipped the army.

At a juncture when growing nervousness fostered every kind of scare, Lord Charles provoked a powerful outburst of popular feeling, and under its pressure the Government decided to hold an inquiry. A sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence was formed, consisting of the Premier, Sir Edward Grey, Haldane, and Lord Morley. It reported in August. On the whole its conclusions were favourable to Fisher but not so unreservedly that he was satisfied with the report. The sub-committee regretted the absence of cordial relations between the Board of Admiralty and the Commander-in-Chief of the Channel Fleet without attributing the entire blame for this state of things either to Fisher or Beresford and like the malcontent Admiral it advised the establishment of a general staff for the navy.[1] The report could not therefore be regarded by Lord Charles Beresford as a defeat. At the end of October he returned to the charge with an attack upon the Board of Admiralty for cashiering two officers whose only fault was that they had given evidence in his favour before the sub-committee. Asquith protested against the publicity with which he brought his charges and the First Lord of the Admiralty attempted to disprove them. Notwithstanding, Lord Charles had reason to claim a victory when at the beginning of December the public learnt that Sir John Fisher had been replaced as First Sea Lord by Admiral Sir Arthur Knyvet Wilson.

A month later Sir John was raised, or rather banished, to the peerage.

Fisher's opponents in the navy were anything but pacifists and the Admiral's fall must, it would seem, be reckoned among the many incidents which in 1909 witnessed to the alarm the English felt at the thought of being insufficiently armed against the danger of a war with Germany. But the pacifists hated the ruinous policy of the Dreadnoughts, and detested the tactless remarks with which that genius or charlatan (or was he both at once?) had irritated Germany. His fall delighted Berlin and certainly helped to relax the tension between England and Germany when at the end of

[1] *Return to an Order of the Honourable the House of Commons, dated 12th August, 1909: or Report of the Sub-Committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence appointed to inquire into certain questions of Naval Policy raised by Lord Charles Beresford.*

1909 after the panic of the previous spring, relations between the two powers improved and a period of calm followed until another crisis arose.

II ATTEMPTS AT A RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN ENGLAND AND GERMANY

I

We must not imagine that all these incidents, the vote by the House of Commons of the necessary credits to lay down four additional Dreadnoughts, the abandonment of the Declaration of London, and Sir John Fisher's fall, produced a deep impression on the public. Its attention was turned elsewhere. The triumphal return at Croydon, in March, of a Unionist candidate on a programme of tariff reform and armaments must be regarded as the final episode of the 'naval scare' which had lasted so many months. After this the struggle over the Budget held the stage. Lloyd George and his friends were thus enabled to take their revenge upon the imperialists—Liberal as well as Unionist. Until the autumn of 1908 Lloyd George had waged a desperate struggle against them not only within the Cabinet but at public meetings. He had approached the German Ambassador, Metternich, in the hope of finding some way of reconciling the two nations. When in August he visited Germany, it was not only to study on the spot the working of the insurance system but to discuss politics with journalists and statesmen, and if the interview with the Emperor which William would gladly have given, could not be arranged and the Chancellor refused to receive him, at least he had a long conversation with the Minister of the Interior, Bethmann-Hollweg.[1]

After this he had been swept off his feet by the current of anti-German passion and had agreed to find the money to build the eight Dreadnoughts. But he soon recovered himself. He was delighted to see those who had demanded the Dreadnoughts

[1] Note by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to Von Schön August 7, 1908. Prince von Bülow to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, August 21, 1908. The journalist, August Stein, to Prince von Bülow, August 22, 1908. (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxv, pp. 119, 138, 142.) Harold Spender, *The Prime Minister*, 1920, pp. 159–161.

refuse to pay the price, and launched an attack upon their selfishness and greed. When in December the moment came to dissolve Parliament and invite the country to choose between the supporters and opponents of the Budget it was in vain that the *Daily Mail* opened its columns to the Socialist patriot, Blatchford, and Balfour in the speech in which he unfolded his programme insisted upon the German peril. It is safe to say that the gains, such as they were, of the Unionist party at the January Election were due not so much to the fear of Germany as to a revolt against the Radicals' fiscal policy. Nor did they wrest the Parliamentary majority from the Liberals, Labour members, and Nationalists, and the Liberal opponents of militarism could flatter themselves with the hope that now the panic of the previous winter had passed they would fulfil the promises made in 1906 and keep the imperialists in check, as they had done until the Second Peace Conference.

They were encouraged by the embarrassment which the attitude of the imperialists betrayed. There was nothing which resembled that bellicose and aggressive enthusiasm which ten years before had led England to conquer South Africa. Since the end of the Boer War England had not added a square inch to her Empire. In Asia she was making terms with Russian imperialism, in Africa assisting French imperialism. Why all this prudence, all these concessions? Because the dominant sentiment in England was fear of the power of Germany. The policy of the Foreign Office was not precisely to isolate Germany; at the beginning indeed it had been an attempt to prevent Germany from isolating England, but to form a species of alliance between England, France, and Russia as a counterpoise to the Triple Alliance, thus applying the doctrine of the European balance of power. But if this aim was openly avowed in the diplomatic despatches of the leading British diplomatists, Sir Charles Hardinge or Sir Nicolas O'Connor, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, though sharing their ideas, were careful not to express them so frankly. They disclaimed the too bellicose design of arraying one group of powers against another. If their public statements were to be trusted, the *entente* with France and Russia did not imply hostility towards Germany. And they taxed their ingenuity to state the policy of the European balance of power in the language of the European concert—that is, in the pacifist

terminology current with a nation which, if it feared Germany, feared her just because it entertained an increasing horror of war.

2

But when we speak of the terminology of pacifism we must be clear as to our meaning. For there are two pacifisms speaking two languages. There is a Socialist pacifism, and there is a pacifism which is the reverse of the Socialist. Socialist pacifism sees in capitalism the source of war as of all the other evils which afflict modern society. And in obedience to the materialist philosophy of history it looks for an economic cause of war which it states as follows. The structure of industrial society is such that the production of a great civilized nation cannot be absorbed by the national market. For this to be possible the wages of the working class would have to be such as to enable it to purchase the entire produce of its labour. But in that case what would become of the employer's profit? The employer is therefore compelled to look for foreign markets for his goods when the home market has been glutted. These markets he finds at first in the other civilized countries but they become industrialized in their turn. A new glut occurs and the industrial countries are compelled to pour the goods they manufacture into all the non-European and uncivilized portions of the globe. Hence the 'scramble for Africa' and the railway battle in Asia Minor and China. The world had become too small to satisfy the greed of European capitalism. If, therefore, a market was to be found for goods, colonies must be conquered, and the ground occupied by other conquering nations contested, for 'trade follows the flag'. And the competition was the keener because the nations of Europe possessed a surplus not only of manufactured articles but of capital. England, France, and Germany sought abroad a double source of profit, for their manufacturers in the first place, then for their investors. In the trenchant language of an English Socialist: 'Capital, like labour, has its periods of unemployment, and its favourite method of meeting them is emigration. . . . Imperialism is simply the political manifestation of the growing tendency of capital accumulated in the more civilized industrial countries to export itself to the less civil-

ized and the less settled.'[1] Imperialism therefore meant in the first place war against the uncivilized peoples, then war between the civilized peoples for the defence or extension of their colonial possessions. Because the modern world was becoming industrialized, it was hastening towards an inevitable war, unless that war were anticipated by a revolution which, by overthrowing capitalism, would destroy the evil at its roots.

This doctrine had its English defenders during the opening years of the twentieth century. But serious flaws can be detected in their argument. It is true that there were soldiers and sailors in great Britain, Germany, and elsewhere who attributed the conflict between England and Germany exclusively to economic causes, as though eager to saddle the merchants with the responsibility for the war they were preparing.[2] But there is no proportion between the sufferings involved by an economic crisis and the vast toll of sacrifice war exacts from the combatants. Surely there were many expedients which industry might employ before having recourse to so desperate a remedy. Moreover, the Tariff Reformers tried to create alarm by pointing to the continual encroachment of German trade. But the majority of the nation turned a deaf ear to their propaganda, and by associating their cause with militarism they rather damaged the latter than advanced the former and made free-traders incredulous of the imminent possibility of war. Conditions had indeed been more favourable to their propaganda at the close of the nineteenth century when a depression in trade gave birth to Williams's slogan—

[1] H. N. Brailsford, *The War of Steel and Gold. A Study of Armed Peace*, 1914, p. 79.

[2] 'Commerce is the leading idea and first interest of the modern state and so soon as a government is faced by the alternative of seeing some millions of workers lose their livelihood through unemployment or of losing a few thousand lives in battle, it will quickly know how to decide.' (General Sir Ian Hamilton, *Compulsory Service* . . . 1911, pp. 46–7.) Admiral von Tirpitz to Prince von Bülow, February 28, 1907: 'It is incontestable that the political friction between Great Britain and ourselves is due predominantly to our economic success and the more extensive demands of a growing population. The City of London is well aware of the increasing importance of German commerce and industry. Since British policy is almost wholly determined by the interests of the city the decision between war and peace depends in the last resort on the attitude of the great commercial magnates.' (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxiii[II], p. 35.) Cf. General Jacobi's report to William II, February 29, 1908, of a conversation with the Russian general Roedinger. (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxv[II], p. 342), also an article by Marschall von Schlieffen. *Der Kreig in der Gegenwart* (*Deutsche Revue*, January 1909; *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. i, pp. 20–1). See on the other hand the brochure, entitled *England und Deutschland* in which in 1908 Schultze-Gävernitz explains the rivalry between England and Germany which is leading them to an inevitable war exclusively by economic causes. Schultze-Gävernitz was not a soldier. But it would not, we think, be easy to find a single economist or representative of commercial circles in England who expressed this point of view.

Made in Germany—yet it was then that England had contemplated an alliance with her most formidable competitor in the world market. Now, on the contrary, trade was prosperous. After a slight setback in 1907 it once more advanced rapidly both in England and in Germany—and in England perhaps even more rapidly than in Germany.[1] Between 1909 and 1913 though the population of Germany was much larger and was increasing more quickly than the British, British imports rose by £144,000,000, German by £91,000,000, British exports by £147,000,000 (£165,000,000 if we include re-exports), German only by £152,000,000. In Europe, German trade was growing at the expense of British. But within the Empire British trade was more than making up the lost ground and everywhere else an equal balance was maintained between the two countries which were advancing at the same rate. Was this the moment to raise the alarm?

In support of their thesis the Socialists appealed to the policy of armaments. But their argument on this point should perhaps be regarded as a particularly unfortunate application of their fundamental thesis. To argue that capitalism is the source of war because it has an interest in the wholesale manufacture of guns and ironclads is to view the question from a very restricted angle. Even if this particular contention were correct, it applied only to the iron and steel manufacture. Surely the cotton, woollen, coal, and in so far as the mercantile marine was concerned, the shipbuilding industries had other interests. Nowhere in England had Germany more friends than in Lancashire. It was on the coast of the North Sea where a bombardment or the landing of an armed force was feared that Germany was an object of alarm and her commercial agents were dreaded, not because they damaged British industry but because they were regarded as officers in disguise. And even in the steel industry we do not observe any very profound hatred of Germany. Sheffield fraternized with Essen and every year Krupp visited England to discuss business with his Yorkshire friends. The position was not different on the Continent where at the beginning of 1909 Essen entered into an agreement with Le Creusot for the joint exploitation of the mineral wealth of Northern Africa. The agreement, it is true, proved abortive but this was because it was wrecked by the opposition,

[1] Bernadotte E. Schmitt, *England and Germany 1740–1914*, 1916, pp. 96 sqq.

sentimental not economic, of French patriotism and Socialism. Is it really true that capitalism spells war? Would it not be nearer the truth to borrow another formula from Socialist ideology irreconcilable with the thesis we are discussing and say that capitalism has no nationality? And may we not draw the conclusion that it is a force which makes for peace?[1]

3

This precisely was the contention of a small book more lucid than profound but captivatingly written by an English man of business who like so many business men before him was an amateur economist. It was first published just before the Election of January 1910 under the title *Europe's Optical Illusion* and a second edition which appeared a year later bore the slightly altered title which became famous, *The Great Illusion*.[2] The arguments of its author, Norman Angell, based on a study of banking rather than industrial capitalism and on the machinery of exchange and credit rather than on the machinery of production, led to the conclusion that the 'optical illusion' from which Europe was suffering, the 'great illusion' was the belief that war could ever be a source of profit. This might have been possible when one man could become another man's property and the victorious state could enslave the citizens of the defeated state and make them work for it. But the position had completely changed since the only normal economic relation between individuals and nations had become one of exchange. Suppose the victorious country annexed the conquered. Then the individual inhabitants of that country would become more dangerous competitors than before of the citizens of the victorious country because no longer

[1] Count von Metternich to Prince von Bülow, May 4, 1906: 'It is a consoling sign that in the very quarter where competition might have been expected to have produced a natural hostility the wish for friendly relations is strongest. In the course of the winter I have often come into contact with prominent representatives of British industry and commerce and have always found a genuine wish that Germany and England might remain on excellent terms with each other.' (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxi[II], p. 425.) 'It was the great commercial centres of Great Britain that were most pacific and least anti-German up to the very outbreak of the Great War.' (Viscount Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty-five Years, 1892–1916*, vol. i, p. 134.)

[2] *Europe's Optical Illusion*, November 1909, reprinted in April and June 1910—*The Great Illusion*. A Study of the Relation of Military Power in Nations to their Economic and Social Advantages, November 1910.

divided from them by a political frontier. Suppose the conqueror were content with imposing an indemnity upon the conquered people. The consequent influx of gold into the victorious country would produce a general rise in prices, and thus render more formidable the economic competition of the defeated country which paid the indemnity. Would it be argued that the causes of war were not economic but movements of feeling inaccessible to financial considerations? History proved that societies of the military type had been steadily losing their ascendancy, that as mankind becomes civilized it becomes commercialized, and that, like wars of religion or duelling, wars between nations are being rendered obsolete by the growth of enlightenment.

The success which *The Great Illusion* enjoyed throughout the entire world is well known. Within a year of publication, it had been translated into eleven languages. In England, with which alone we are here concerned, it made a profound impression. Nothing short of a school grew up around it, among the Cambridge undergraduates first, then in commercial circles at Manchester, then at all the universities and in all the industrial centres of the United Kingdom. Finally, there were no less than forty study circles centred round an institution called from the name of the patron who financed it: The Garton Foundation for Promoting the Study of International Policy.[1] And indeed, apart from the intrinsic merits of the book, its success is not difficult to explain. For that other ideology which explained war as due to the economic structure of the modern world was at once too revolutionary and too pessimistic to appeal to the British public. Since it represented war as one of the evils inherent in a capitalist Society it left only the choice between war and a revolt of the working class, and Englishmen, even Englishmen of Socialist sympathies, disliked both. And it conflicted with the deep-seated conviction of business men who, whatever might be said in Germany, knew that they desired not war but peace. Norman Angell's philosophy, on the contrary, suited perfectly the Radical free traders who, threatened after their victory at the 1906 Election by

[1] Lord Esher '*La Guerre et La Paix quelques facteurs nouveaux de la politique internationale*,' a speech delivered at the Sorbonne, March 27, 1914. (*The Influence of King Edward and other Essays*, 1915, pp. 229 sqq.; see especially pp. 237–8.) Norman Angell the *Foundations of International Policy*, 1914, pp. 194 sqq., 220 sqq. King Edward who was not much of a reader read Norman Angell's book and was attracted by his brilliant and clear reasoning (*Lord Esher*, iv, p. 55).

the double counter-offensive of the militarists and the tariff reformers, were delighted to meet with a popular book which justified their belief in free trade and their hatred of a policy of armaments. Moreover, at the same moment Lloyd George's great Budget had brought home to the wealthy class which constituted the shock troops of the Unionist party the heavy cost not only of war but even of preparation for it. Even Sir Edward Grey's imperialist convictions would seem to have been shaken. Anxious for the fate of European civilization 'if this tremendous expenditure goes on' we find him in 1911 refusing to believe war possible: 'I think it is much more likely that the burden will be dissipated by internal revolution, by the revolt of the masses of men against taxation.'[1]

4

This pacifist movement, and the movement inseparable from it in favour of a better understanding with Germany which came to birth after the Tangier episode—and had never altogether ceased—was now gaining a new strength, marked by the foundation of societies, the publication of magazines, and the exchange of visits between British and German members of Protestant religious bodies, British and German journalists, and the municipalities of large towns in Great Britain and Germany. But had it struck deep roots? In the first place, among the leaders of the movement we notice a disquietingly large proportion of German or German Jewish names. Sir Max Waechter was advocating a European federation against America which would include England and Germany.[2] Lucien Wolf urged as a reply to the raising of the French tariff the conclusion of a commercial treaty between England and Germany. Sir John Brunner of the great chemical firm, Mond-Brunner, was President of the National Liberal Federation. Sir Alfred Mond of the same firm directed the *Westminster Gazette*. Sir Edgar Speyer, who controlled the underground railways of London, was intimate both with Asquith

[1] H. of C., March 13, 1911 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1911, vol. xxii, p. 1985).

[2] Sir Max Waechter, *European Federation. A Lecture delivered at the London Institution on the 25th February, 1909*. See also on Sir Max Waechter's project an article in the *Economist* for October 12, 1907; Sir Max Waechter was one of the Vice-Presidents of the Tariff Reform League—also *Contemporary Review*, November 1912 (vol. cii, pp. 621 sqq.). Sir Max Waechter 'The Federation of Europe: Is it Possible?' (an article in which the writer tones down the anti-American colour of his original project).

and the German Chancellor.[1] Lord Rothschild in London and the banker Schwabach in Berlin worked hand in hand to improve relations between the two countries.[2] Sir Ernest Cassel founded an Anglo-German Institute to assist young Englishmen who settled in Germany and young Germans who settled in England.[3] Whenever a meeting was to be arranged between the rulers of England and Germany, we find Sir Ernest Cassel, the great London financier, in communication with Albert Ballin, the great Hamburg shipbuilder. Both were Jews and Germans by birth. Ballin had remained faithful to his native creed and country, Cassel had been nationalized an Englishman and converted to Catholicism. Ballin was an intimate friend of William II, Cassel both the friend and banker of Edward VII who, when in London, wound up every afternoon at his whist table.[4] All these men brought to the cause of peace the far from negligible support of their influence and brains. But they can hardly be regarded as representative of English society.

Other influences played their part in the movement for peace, of which the most important were the activities of those humanitarian groups, religious and intellectual, which found a willing and eloquent mouthpiece in Lloyd George. But even under a Liberal Government we must not exaggerate their power. They had indeed succeeded in compelling a reform in the administration of the Belgian Congo. But that was because the agitation served important financial interests and was supported by all the commercial magnates of Liverpool, who were eager to destroy the monopoly of a foreign country. And their violent hostility towards Russia, which found expression in loud protests when the King of England went to Reval and again the following year when the Czar visited the King at Cowes, was a source of considerable embarrassment to the Government. But when all is said their opposition effected nothing. The friendship between England and Russia had more dangerous enemies in the imperialist camp and when it was a matter of attacking the new Russian policy of the Foreign Office Arthur Ponsonby found his ally in Lord

[1] Prince von Bülow to Count von Metternich, December 25, 1908; Von Bethman-Hollweg to Count von Metternich, February 3, 1911 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxviii, p. 37; vol. xxvii[II], p. 668).

[2] For the details of their correspondence see Paul H. von Schwabach, *Aus meiner Akten*, 1927.

[3] *The Times*, August 17, 1911.

[4] For Sir Ernest Cassel see Sir Sidney Lee, *King Edward VII*, pp. 60 sqq. *et passim*.

Curzon. When, on the other hand, it was a question of attacking directly the policy of armaments, we have already seen the weakness of the pacifist opposition. The general staffs of the British and French armies were making joint preparations for an eventual war with Germany. Can it be said that Parliament seriously attempted to exercise its right of control by demanding full information on the subject?[1] The pacifists clung to the belief that the advent of a Liberal Government would inaugurate an era of disarmament and international peace. What had they done to prevent the Admiralty building Dreadnoughts in constantly increasing numbers, eight now at once? Did it mean that the instinct of 'pugnacity', denounced by Norman Angell as a survival of barbarism, was still powerful even among the sincerest friends of peace? In a powerful novel, H. G. Wells showed how 'a war in the air' threatened European civilization with ruin.[2] But he played at soldiers with his two little boys and invented new military games for their amusement.[3] W. T. Stead was the most vociferous and the most theatrical representative of British pacifism. But he was also one of the protagonists of the formula: two keels to one: two English Dreadnoughts to one German. In the Cabinet Lord Loreburn was a convinced opponent of Sir Edward Grey's foreign policy, but he did not object to Lady Loreburn's christening a Dreadnought.[4] And in a book written a little later, one of

[1] 'We hear that we are under a formal obligation to assist the French armies with an expeditionary force which would land in France in the event of an attack on France by Germany. This open secret is the property of all in the three countries concerned who pretend to be well informed. It has been set in black and white by the "*Temps*"; it has passed uncontradicted in the French Chamber; it has received publicity on German platforms from an authority so competent as Herr Bassermann, the leader of the National Liberals. It is only our own House of Commons which shows no curiosity to have it affirmed or denied.' (The *Nation*, March 12, 1910, p. 903).

[2] *The War in the Air and particularly how Mr. Bert Smallways fared while it lasted*, 1908. For a general statement of H. G. Wells' pre-war opinions see vol. xx of the Atlantic Edition of his works entitled: *The War in the Air and other War Forebodings*.

[3] *Little Wars. A Game for Boys from Twelve Years of Age to One Hundred and Fifty and for the more Intelligent Sort of Girls who like Boys' Games and Books. With an Appendix on Kriegspiel*, 1913. The book, it is true, concludes on a pacifist note. 'Great War is at present, I am convinced, not only the most expensive game in the universe, but it is a game out of all proportion. Not only are the masses of men and material and suffering and inconvenience too monstrously big for reason but—the available heads we have for it are too small (p. 100). But this does not alter the fact that Wells played the general for the entertainment of himself, his children and his readers.

[4] *The Times*, October 28, 1909. Cf. John Viscount Morley, *Memorandum on Resignation, August 1914*, 1928, p. 19: 'With a fleet of overwhelming power, a disinterestedness beyond suspicion, a foreign minister of proved ability, truthfulness and self-control, when the smoke of battlefields has cleared from our European sky, England might have expected an influence not to be acquired by a hundred of her little Expeditionary Forces.'

the most forcible and sincere impeachments by an Englishman's pen of his country's policy during the years which led up to the War, it is amusing to read such an unconscious relevation as the following remark: 'So long as he (the author) lives he will remember the thrill of admiration and something akin to pride that he experienced when he viewed the Grand Fleet at Spithead in July 1914. It was a mighty monument to the sciences and craftsmanship of Britain.'[1]

5

Nevertheless, the British public was thoroughly convinced that it wanted peace, even if perhaps it did not always want its indispensable conditions. Even during the naval scare attempts were made to pour oil on the troubled waters. In September 1908 a leading review, the *Fortnightly*, published an important article, unsigned, whose anonymous author urged that an attempt should be made to effect an Anglo-German *entente*. 'Beyond question the British and the Germans are the two races most fitted to advance the orderly, competent administration of the world. In fact, if they could only divide up between them the troubled portions of the globe there would be a good chance of firm, steady government

[1] J. T. Walton Newbold, *How Europe Armed for War (1871–1914)*, 1916, p. 76. The author adds: 'It was a tragedy of steel cunningly designed and admirably wedded to the fulfilment of the misdirected genius of a nation.' But these words are double-edged and what matters is the thrill of admiration and pride which runs through them. And it is perhaps among the revolutionary writers that the most striking expressions of England's pride in her navy are to be found. The syndicalist, Stephen Reynolds, in the preface to a book he published in 1912 entitled, *The Lower Deck. The Navy and the Nation* writes as follows: 'Of all our great public institutions I confess to being proudest of the Navy. For it does seem to me that, whatever its faults, the Navy is the outward and visible sign of that which is best in the British seafaring spirit. Armaments, no doubt, are an appalling piece of international pigheadedness, a frightful waste of human lives and national resources; yet I imagine that men of the future will look back on us and say: "Out of that barbarous foolishness they created, on an heroic scale, one thing that was splendid in spite of its defects—their Navy"—And I fancy that our naval history will make their blood run faster as it makes mine. An economic waste may be in other ways a gain.' (p. vii.) Notice also the perplexity felt by young Keeling, who was indeed a Fabian, not a syndicalist, but also a convinced friend of Germany. '. . . I see as clearly as anything that aggressiveness and quarrelsomeness is no earthly good—it has done me no good and won't do anyone else any good. Tolstoy taken literally is absurd . . . I am a Big Navy Man. But the spirit of Tolstoy and Shaw or Voltaire (each at his best) is the only tolerable outlook on life one sees and feels.' (To Miss Townshend, June 3, 1914); *Keeling Letters and Recollections*, 1918, p. 173. '. . . I am hesitating on the brink of taking part in Liberal politics. I think I shall; I don't see what else I can do usefully in politics. I am decidedly anti-revolutionist, and I don't believe in most of the doctrines which distinguish the I.L.P. from the Liberals—the right to work, extreme anti-militarism, Little-Navy, and Little-Englandism.' (To the Same, June 14, 1914; ibid., p. 175.)

replacing flabbiness and chaos in all quarters which cause anxiety from time to time.'[1] The crisis which immediately followed the annexation of Bosnia did not prevent the Liberal Press in London and Manchester expressing its desire to see the question settled by the joint arbitration of England and Germany. It was, to be sure, an empty wish, for it ran directly counter to the deliberate policy of the German Government. But the crisis had barely been brought to an end by Isvolsky's surrender when another important review, the *Nineteenth Century*, published the answers obtained by a journalist who had sounded several Germans in high position with a view to discovering a basis for an *entente* between the two countries.[2] Their answers cannot be called encouraging. The writer's desire for an *entente* is obviously far stronger than that of his German interlocutors. Nevertheless, there existed in Germany and even in government circles a party which began to feel alarm at the dangers in which their country might be involved by the naval policy pursued during the last few years.

For we must not imagine that the diplomatic victory which Von Bülow gained in 1909 over Isvolsky was such an unmitigated triumph as his victory over Delcassé in 1905. His stroke at Tangier had set the seal on his reputation for statesmanship. The episode of Bosnia was the prelude to his downfall. He had arranged the

[1] 'Why not an Anglo-German *entente*?' (*Fortnightly Review*, September 1908, pp. 394 sqq. and 401). For the real or supposed affinities between the two peoples cf. Basil Williams, 'Anglo-German Relations' (*Edinburgh Review*, October 1909, No. 430, pp. 447 sqq.). See especially p. 447: 'Nowhere on foreign soil have English writers and thinkers found a readier hearing than in Germany, or those in Germany than with us. Such close connections are but natural: for we are of the same blood, and in the main of the same religion, while in fundamental characteristics no two nations resemble one another more closely than the English and the Germans.' See also a little later Sir Henry H. Johnston, 'German Views of an Anglo-German Understanding' (*Nineteenth Century and After*, December 1910, vol. lxviii, pp. 978 sqq.). 'The Need for an Anglo-German Understanding' (ibid., January 1911, vol. lxix, pp. 82 sqq.). See especially vol. lxviii, p. 978: 'Any person of average intelligence and over, who has been enabled to visit the German Empire at the present time, even cursorily, must be aware of the enormous progress made by the German people in science, art, social legislation, internal communications, commerce, and the amenities of life. And even a tourist of no quick apprehension—in fact, for this purpose the stupider the better—must feel that in travelling about Germany he is more at home, made to feel more at home, than in any other country outside the British Dominions and the United States, for the reason that nowhere outside the lands where English is the national speech is our tongue more widely spoken than in Germany; with no race in the world have we so frequently inter-married than with the Germans.' And conversely on the psychological paradox of the Anglo-French *Entente* see Whelpley, *The Trade of the World*, 1913, p. 99. We have called attention to all these passages to bring home to the reader on the one hand how sincere were the sentiments they express, on the other hand for how little they counted on August 4, 1914.

[2] Aeneas O'Neill, 'Six German Opinions on the Naval Situation' (*Nineteenth Century and After*, No. 339, May 1909, vol. lxv, pp. 725 sqq.).

former in complete harmony with his sovereign. The latter left them at loggerheads. The *Daily Telegraph* incident was the occasion of the quarrel, but its causes lay deeper. The uneasiness with which the Chancellor regarded the anti-English naval policy pursued by William II and Von Tirpitz was the greater because it was so costly and the problem of raising the money was more difficult for the German than for the British Government. For in Germany there were no direct taxes which could be increased whenever more money was needed. In consequence of the still incomplete unification of the Empire the sources of revenue at the disposition of the Government were inadequate. To increase them it would be necessary to reform the entire system of taxation and such a reform must, according to the method adopted, offend the rich or the poor, alternatives equally formidable. Von Bülow, therefore, at the end of 1908, was pressing prudence upon the German Admiralty. Could they not build fewer ironclads and more torpedo boats and submarines? Or without abandoning the programme of 1909 as regards the number of ships to be built, could they not build them more slowly?[1]

To statesmen trained in the old school of Bismarck the position seemed nothing short of scandalous. The war to which they must look forward would not be a continental struggle which might lead later to English intervention. Thanks to Tirpitz and William II—so the malcontents alleged—the threat of a naval war with England hung over Germany. The general staff of the army which had always looked askance at the constantly increasing prestige of the Admiralty regarded as madness a war which must be carried on by a navy which as was known and admitted beforehand could never equal the British. What should the army do in that case? While the British army apprehended a German landing on the coast of Norfolk, the German army found itself compelled to form very different plans. In the event of war with England the Chief of Staff would be obliged 'to ask the Emperor to declare war on France at the same time'.[2]

[1] Prince von Bülow to Admiral von Tirpitz, December 23, 1908; The Same to the Same, January 11, 1909 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxviii, pp. 39, 61).

[2] 'Protocol by the Head of the Ministry of Marine, Vice-Admiral von Müller, reporting a meeting held at the Chancery on June 3, 1909, from half-past four to half-past eight.' (A. von Tirpitz, *Politische Dokumente*, vol. i, p. 160.) It is interesting to notice the forecasts made by several Germans a year earlier about the time of the Reval meeting. The German economist Schultze-Gävernitz after predicting that England would declare war on Germany continues: 'England's naval victories would perhaps be compensated by the defeat

But before adopting such extreme measures, might not Germany take advantage of the favourable opportunity presented by her recent successes in the Balkans, and her agreement with France about Morocco to make new proposals to England such as would not be derogatory to German prestige? Von Bülow summoned the Ambassador Metternich to a Cabinet council held on June 3 to meet Tirpitz, Von Moltke, Von Schön, Bethmann-Hollweg, and Von Müller. He sketched an entire programme of reconciliation, a colonial agreement, a pact of neutrality with England, and an abatement of the naval competition. He fell from power, overthrown, for the first time in the history of the German Empire, by a majority in the Reichstag. He was replaced by Bethmann-Hollweg who immediately adopted his predecessor's policy. Negotiations were begun between the two Governments and dragged on very slowly for two years. The Emperor, though extremely sceptical, indeed almost hostile, did not refuse his consent.[1]

of France on land. An unsuccessful naval war would necessarily force Germany to adopt Napoleon's policy which is far from her present intention'—and he adds: 'Would it be possible to strike England a blow on land—for example by allying ourselves with the Moslem world? In any event such a war (between Germany and England) which many of our jingoes regard as a naval war easily despatched would usher in a period of general and long-drawn conflict.' (Dr. von Schultze-Gävernitz, *England und Deutschland. Zweite erweiterte Auflage der Festschrift zur Geburtstag Seiner Koniglichen Hoheit des Grossherzog von Baden. am 9 Juli, 1907*, 1908.) And the head of the Admiralty von Müller wrote to von Tirpitz on August 31, 1908: 'It is easy to say, "better a world war than dishonourable peace". But what aspect will this world war assume? What main objectives will it pursue? Will it spread from France to England, or will its theatre be the East? Have we sufficient naval strength, our leaders being the men they are, even to contemplate tasks of such a Napoleonic magnitude, not to speak of achieving them? To answer such questions is a very serious responsibility.' (A. von Tirpitz, *Politische Dokumente*, vol. i, p. 85.) Is it credible that no echo of these speculations, reached England? As early as 1907 Austin Harrison wrote: 'All the loose talk of war amounts, in fact, to this: if ever we have friction with Germany, France will be made to foot the bill. The French know it; all German diplomacy is based upon it. In the event of hostilities, Germany will invade France within a few hours of the declaration of war, directly through Belgium. Nor can there be any question that all her military plans of invasion are drawn up with that intention. The British Fleet, Germans say, may destroy our Navy—if they can get at it—but we shall be in Paris in a short time; and the price of peace will be some £750,000,000 and the entire French Navy, to say nothing of ports, and forts, another useful accessory.' (*England and Germany*, p. 169.)

[1] For these negotiations see *British Documents* . . . vol. vi, pp. 283 sqq.; and *Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxviii, pp. 199 sqq.

The ultimate and avowed object of these negotiations was to put an end to the naval competition which threatened to ruin both nations without benefiting either. But as soon as the position was stated in these terms it was England's turn to make demands. Either she simply asked for an assurance that the German Naval Law of 1900 would not be reinforced by a further law before 1920 when the entire programme would be completed—for example, in 1912, the critical year after which, if the law of 1900 were strictly carried out, Germany would lay down only two Dreadnoughts a year instead of four. Or she suggested ingenious devices by which Germany could reduce her naval expenditure without violating the provisions of the law of 1900, for example, by building more slowly or by building smaller vessels.

To these proposals the German negotiators returned an evasive answer. The fleet for whose construction within twenty years the law of 1900 made provision was not specially directed against England. It was regarded by the German Admiralty as strictly proportionate to the present position of German commerce and the strength of her mercantile marine. If the German Government were to accept a smaller navy, it must be in return for some adequate compensation—for example, the conclusion of a 'political agreement' between the two Powers. It was this request for an agreement which Bethmann-Hollweg, on this point obeying the Emperor's express wish, persisted in pushing to the front, whereas the British kept the limitation of armaments in the foreground. Already when Bülow was Chancellor three alternative proposals had been prepared by the German Foreign Office, a proposal for a regular alliance, a proposal for a pact of neutrality, and a vaguer proposal for an *entente*. At the close of 1909 it was the pact of neutrality that was suggested. England was to promise 'benevolent neutrality' towards Germany, and Germany reciprocally towards England whatever the conflict in which either power might engage. Sir Edward Grey, and this no doubt was what William II intended, found the proposal extremely embarrassing.

How indeed could he admit that the *entente* with France made any alliance or quasi-alliance with Germany impossible? And how could he conclude even a pact of neutrality when the General Staffs of England and France were concocting the best means to

protect the North of France in the event of a German invasion? He evaded the issue by replying that neither the Anglo-French nor the Anglo-Russian *entente* contained such a guarantee of neutrality, comprised indeed no provisions other than those by which the powers concerned—England and France, England and Russia—settled amicably individual questions in dispute between them. Why not therefore conclude a simple colonial agreement between England and Germany? On the question of Bagdad and the Persian railways a settlement could surely be reached. To this the German Government raised no objection: before his fall, von Bülow had contemplated such a colonial agreement. But it insisted on the primary importance of a political pact. Sir Edward Grey was not prepared to meet this repeated demand by a blunt refusal but sought to find a formula which would satisfy Germany without losing the friendship of France and Russia. What could it be? He explained his views on the matter to the colonial delegates when in May 1911 the Imperial Conference once more met in London. 'The *entente* must be public.' It must not 'put us back into the old bad relations with France and Russia'. And it must be of such a nature that 'there is no chance of a disturbance of the peace between Germany and France or Germany and Russia'.[1] In short, it was to be such an understanding as the temper of the Continental powers made impossible. Did not Sir Edward know this? In May 1911 the conversations had already been suspended for several months.

The conversations had been secret, as also was Sir Edward Grey's statement to the Imperial Conference. Nevertheless, the mere fact that they were begun and continued so long is a proof that the feeling of the public towards Germany was not so hostile as it had been during the diplomatic crisis which followed the annexation of Bosnia. The struggle over the Budget, and the conflict between the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament had contributed largely to this change of feeling. Public attention

[1] H. H. Asquith, *The Genesis of War*, 1923, p. 124. Cf. Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen, September 1, 1909: 'There is nothing in our agreements with France and Russia which is directed against Germany and therefore nothing to bar a friendly arrangement with Germany. . . . I want a good understanding with Germany, but it must be one which will not impoverish those which we have with France and Russia—I should have thought some formula could be found to which they also could be parties; that would be the best and most reassuring solution, though I see that the French could not be a party to anything which looked like confirming the loss of Alsace and Lorraine.' (*British Documents* . . vol. v, pp. 803–4.)

was elsewhere. And other circumstances favoured if not an *entente* it least a relaxation of tension between England and Germany.

7

In the first place there was King Edward's death. His influence upon British foreign policy, as we have already emphasized, was slight. It could have been as important as it is sometimes represented, there could have existed that 'policy of King Edward' which legend depicts, only if the King had been a greater man than he was, and he would have found himself compelled to override the opposition of public opinion as expressed by the Press, by his Parliament, by his ministers and by the civil service.[1] There were, however, two—and only two—occasions on which up to a point he had insisted on having his own way. When he decided to visit Paris in 1903 he had to overcome the scruples of his ministers who were afraid that it might be the occasion for hostile manifestations which might imperil the understanding with France they were trying to achieve. And when he decided to visit Reval in 1908 he was obliged to defy the noisy opposition of the Radicals who thought it disgraceful that the King of England, by visiting the Czar for the first time in history, should appear to condone the sanguinary repression of the revolution. But on both occasions the policy which these visits furthered was the policy of the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, and the War Office and a policy supported by the great bulk of the Press. These and all the other visits he made, accompanied by Sir Charles Hardinge, were simply the visits of an ambassador more mobile and more splen-

[1] 'The popular idea, outside the British Isles, that King Edward moulded the foreign policy of his country, is of course pure illusion. Once or twice in a century, the policy of a great nation is determined by the throne or by the action of a statesman. Such men were Cavour and Bismarck. But as a rule the force that drives one nation towards unity, another towards revolution and another towards expansion, comes from the necessity of the people influenced by the conditions under which it is striving for existence.' (Lord Esher, *The Influence of King Edward and Essays on other Subjects*, 1915, p. 50.) Lord Esher who held an important position at court had been one of the most active agents in bringing about the *rapprochement* between England and France. In the article from which the passage just quoted has been taken and which appeared shortly after the death of Edward VII in the *Deutsche Revue*—and which was probably submitted to King George before publication—it is also of interest to notice a passage in which Lord Esher expresses the wish that the Anglo-French *entente* might be transformed into a triple *entente* between England, Germany, and France (ibid., p. 53). See further on the influence exercised by King Edward on foreign policy the judicious remarks of Jacques Bardoux 'Victoria I, Edouard VII, Georges V,' pp. 230 sqq.

did than the rest but also perhaps more anxious to obey exactly the instructions of his Foreign Minister. Nor were these Royal journeys so consistently anti-German as they are often represented. The visit to Cronberg was not a deliberate slight on William II though the latter chose to regard it as such. And the visit to Berlin in January 1909 six months after Cronberg and three months after the *Daily Telegraph* incident, was an advance made to the German nation as well as to its Emperor. It would seem that on the occasion of this visit William II had the satisfaction of hearing his uncle express approval of his policy of naval construction and disavow the campaign the British Press was conducting against it.[1] On the other hand, we must remember that these visits—an innovation in British diplomacy—gave the policy of the Foreign Office such a dramatic embodiment that the growth of the legend is easy to understand. And it is not surprising that William II in particular should have regarded them as hostile acts or rather as encroachments upon his own province. For he had been the creator of the part. For a long time his journeys had focused the attention of the world. But now accounts of the comings and goings of another monarch filled the European Press. The King of the great rival nation visited all the rulers in Europe including the one whom William was not allowed to visit.

It was intolerable, and Edward VII's death relieved the Emperor's vanity, so often hurt on a particularly tender spot since his uncle's accession to the British throne. Moreover, he came to London for the King's funeral and the emotion he displayed was not a mere formality. The son of an English woman, England was, after all, in many respects his second fatherland. At Windsor—at Buckingham Palace, memories of childhood and youth thronged thick about him. He was delighted to witness among a people whom the German Press had depicted as consumed by the fever of revolution the grave bearing, the respect, and the genuine sorrow with which tens of thousands of his subjects watched the funeral of their monarch. And since the London crowd transferred to him something of the emotion it felt in the presence of King Edward's coffin, before he left England something not unlike a reconciliation had been effected between the British people and the German Emperor.

[1] Szögyény. Despatch from Berlin, February 17, 1909 (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. i, p. 835).

The new King was a more pronounced Conservative than his father and, as we should expect from an old sailor, more directly concerned at the growth of the German fleet than the clubman he succeeded.

But, on the other hand, he can hardly have failed to entertain towards imperial Germany those mingled sentiments of esteem and dislike felt by the entire British aristocracy and by all the officers in high command, and the English ruling class had come to the conclusion that for the moment at least their esteem was greater than their dislike. The naval attaché at Berlin whose reports were believed to have embittered the relations between England and Germany was replaced by another charged to create a more friendly atmosphere. Admiral Jellicoe visited Germany and made himself pleasant and popular. In England the domestic situation had become too serious for the Conservatives even to think of attempting to divert the voter's attention by reviving the German peril when in December they were again summoned to the poll. And two months later both McKenna and Sir Edward Grey speaking in the House of Commons on the navy estimates used language calculated to give satisfaction to German opinion.

8

McKenna, as First Lord of the Admiralty, discovered that England had exaggerated the speed of German naval construction. The German Government had spoken the truth when it made diplomatic protests against the miscalculations of the British Admiralty. It had been given out that by March 1911 Germany would possess nine Dreadnoughts as against England's twelve. In fact, she possessed only five. Did that mean that all the recent expenditure on Dreadnoughts, eight in 1909, five in 1910, and this year five more, had been money wasted? Not at all: for even at this rate of construction, to look a few years ahead, the Two-Power Standard could not be maintained. Liberal ministers began once more to give the formula a more moderate interpretation. McKenna asked for a fleet that was 'Supreme as against any foreign navy, and as against any reasonable probable combination which we might have to meet single-handed', and Sir Edward Grey also declared in so many words that the American navy

must not be taken into account, and that he would be satisfied with 'a fleet sufficient to hold the sea against any reasonably probable combination'.[1] It was an empty formula at a time when England had no coalition of hostile navies to fear. It meant, in fact, a fleet superior to the German fleet by itself. And what degree of superiority would suffice? The special effort now being made would give England in 1913 thirty large ironclads to twenty-one German. Not 'two keels to one' but almost three keels to two. It was the formula which in 1908 Lloyd George had championed against the formula of the party in favour of large armaments[2] and the Wilhelmstrasse interpreted Sir Edward Grey's speech as a surrender. 'If four years ago', the Emperor remarked, 'we had taken the advice of Metternich and von Bülow and ceased to build, we should be Copenhagened now ! You see how our determination is respected and how they are obliged to submit to hard facts. Let us go on then quietly building.'[3]

In May, William II paid another visit to London. The occasion of his visit, which was a family affair (Sir Edward Grey seems to have eluded all his attempts to discuss politics)[4] was the opening of the monument to Queen Victoria, grandmother both of the German Emperor and the English King. The spectacle Europe presented to his eyes was calculated to flatter his pride. He saw England stripped of the bulwark the Upper House had presented against the demands of the pacifists, labour, and the Irish. He saw anarchy spreading in France: a strike of post office employees had been followed by a strike of railwaymen, and the strike of vine dressers which had assumed such formidable proportions in the South two years before was prolonged in Champagne by disorders in which German *agents provacateurs* had a hand. In 1909 Russia had shown the world how weak she had been left by the combined disasters of the war and revolution, and the two Emperors were drawn together by their common fear of popular insurrection. William did not want war. Never had the ruler of a powerful state while employing so freely the language of war,

[1] H. of C., March 13, 1911 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 1911 Commons, 5th Series, vol. xxii, pp. 1916, 1979).

[2] Prince von Metternich to Chancellor von Bülow, August 1, 1908 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxiv, pp. 113–14).

[3] Note to a despatch from the naval attaché in London to the German Admiralty, March 14, 1911 (von Tirpitz, *Politische Dokumente*, vol. i, p. 189).

[4] Szögyény's despatch from Berlin, January 19, 1912 (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. iii, p. 778).

so dreaded its reality. He disapproved of the pan-German agitation which was becoming increasingly vocal. Though in the bottom of his heart he may have sympathized with its aims, he found fault with its impatience. He cherished the hope that the day would come when his navy would intimidate England as the German army had intimidated France since 1871. When it arrived a German statesman might perhaps risk the decisive venture.[1] But this was nothing more than a vague dream whose accomplishment he was glad to believe would be remote. The speeches delivered in March by Sir Edward Grey and McKenna, the cordial welcome he received when he visited London unofficially with his wife and two of his sons, and the information he received from all quarters confirmed him in his belief—and he was delighted to have it confirmed—that peace was secure.

If peace was secure, the moment was perhaps favourable to make England a gesture of friendship. Not indeed of the kind dear to humanitarian Liberalism. When the American Government invited the three Governments of England, France, and Germany to conclude general treaties of arbitration, the proposal, gladly accepted by the French and British Governments, had been rejected by William, and to any protests that might be raised he was in a position to reply that at that very moment the House of Lords, after much procrastination, was rejecting the Declaration of London, thereby nullifying all the work accomplished at the Second Hague Conference. If however peace were really assured how could the negotiations begun in 1909 between Grey and Bethmann-Hollweg, be allowed to break down finally? In the matter of a reduction of armaments which Germany could not accept, and in the matter of a pact of neutrality which England

[1] See a curious article in the *Allgemeine Evangelische Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* written in November 1908 to justify the interview published by the *Daily Telegraph* and which probably expresses the views current in the Emperor's immediate entourage: 'The Emperor is doing his best to secure the friendship of Great Britain. This is not very honourable for us but is *necessary so long as we are obliged to avoid war with England* because we are not yet sufficiently strong to risk it. It is only a short time since the German people understood our need of an adequate navy. And we must go on improving it and competing with England until if she still possesses three times as many vessels as we she will be unable to find the sailors to man them. Until that day to agitate for war is sheer lunacy. The mischief of which our Press has been guilty in this connection, the *Emperor is striving to undo*.' (Quoted by Ed. Bernstein, *Die Englische Gefahr und das deutsche Volk*, 1911, p. 20.) For the dreams of a naval war in which the Kaiser liked to indulge see the report of interviews given in Berlin between February 22 and 25, 1910 by William II and The Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg. Abbazia March 6, 1910 (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. ii, pp. 724 sqq.).

could not accept, agreement was impossible. But Sir Edward Grey had again put forward the suggestion of an exchange of information between the respective Admiralties. In both countries competition had been increased by mutual suspicion of bad faith; the statements made to their respective Parliaments by the British and German ministers as to the actual state of naval construction were regarded in the other country as mendacious. Would it not be possible to allow the naval attachés under certain definite conditions to visit the dockyards and see for themselves the exact number, size, and equipment of the vessels being built? To a British note of June 1, Bethmann-Hollweg returned a favourable reply on the 27th. For the first time he communicated to Tirpitz the conversations between the two countries, and asked him to prepare for negotiations with the technical experts of the British Admiralty. But the German note of June 27 received no reply.[1] For on July 1 England, while still plunged in domestic strife, found herself taken unawares by a new Moroccan crisis, Franco-German and Anglo-German, more serious than any preceding crisis had been.

9

When the summer of 1911 opened, it was evident that the Moroccan agreement concluded between France and Germany in February 1909 was doomed to remain ineffective. It met with too much opposition in Morocco itself, where the French and Germans refused to be reconciled, in France, where it was unpopular alike with the Socialists and the Nationalists and in England, where it interfered with too many private interests.[2] Moreover its phraseology was ambiguous. It was very quickly discovered that in many spheres, the railways for example, any formula of economic collaboration which did not involve some administrative or political condominium was not easy to discover. Nor was it easy to apply an instrument which recognized that France possessed 'special political interests' throughout the whole of Morocco and at the same time maintained the inviolability of the Algeciras pact which denied that any European power, least

[1] *British Documents* . . . vol. vii, pp. 636 sqq. *Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxviii, pp. 402 sqq.

[2] André Tardieu, *Le Mystère d'Agadir*, p. 79.

of all France, possessed special political rights in Morocco. In May the French Government made use of this German recognition of her privileged position to despatch a punitive expedition to Fez. The Spanish Government, anxious to safeguard the secret clauses of the 1904 agreement, occupied El-Ksar which was situated within the territory which they assigned to her. The German Government which had protested from the first against the despatch of the French expedition to Fez as a violation of the pact of Algeciras now regarded it as definitively condemned. While conversations were in progress between the German and French Governments as to the possibility of permitting a French occupation of the country in return for adequate compensations, the German Government despatched on July 1 a small warship, the *Panther*, which was followed shortly by a larger vessel, to the port of Agadir in Southern Morocco. The pretext for the step was the protection of German interests in the district. The true motive was to compel negotiations between the three powers—France, Germany, and England—for a new settlement of the Moroccan question on the ruins of the Algeciras pact.[1]

The German step was calculated to annoy the British Government, thus deliberately ignored. But it was embarrassed by domestic difficulties. The coronation had brought about a truce in the struggle between the Commons and the Lords. In a few days the conflict would be resumed. And it had not even effected a truce in an even more serious social struggle, a general strike of seamen and dockers which, aggravated by outbreaks of rioting, had since June brought the work of all the ports to a standstill. In France, the political situation was more chaotic than ever. Since Clémenceau's fall and the election of 1910 the disintegration of parties and the instability of cabinets had reached a climax. Only a week before the Germans despatched the battleship to Agadir, a new cabinet had confronted the Chamber. Of the Prime Minister, Joseph Caillaux, who had never before been President of the Council, nothing was known except that as Minister of Finance he had pursued for several months with but slight success a policy

[1] For the Agadir crisis see *Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxix, pp. 137 sqq. *British Documents* . . . vol. vii, pp. 173 sqq. *Le Mystère d'Agadir* by André Tardieu though the work of a partisan and deprived to a certain extent of its documentary value by subsequent publications is still worth consulting. We must however add that on the question with which we are specially concerned, England's attitude during the second half of 1911, the author is completely silent.

of economic *rapprochement* with Germany. At the Foreign Office, de Selves was a political tiro who was not only for the first time Minister for Foreign Affairs but for the first time a Cabinet minister. There could be no doubt that the German Government hoped to take advantage of the obvious weakness of both Governments to punish France for the audacity of her expedition to Fez and England for having made common cause with France for several years. But what exactly was her aim? By making a landing at Agadir to drive England and France into war? Or simply to occupy Southern Morocco and defy France and England to treat the occupation as a *casus belli*? Or to compel France by the threat of occupying part of Morocco to make territorial concessions elsewhere? And were these concessions to be extensive and humiliating for France? Or on the contrary so moderate that they would satisfy France and eventually detach her from England? If that were Germany's intention, her stroke at Agadir was the worst possible inauguration of such a policy. It aroused too much anger in France, too much greed in Germany. It is however probable that the German Government, at variance with itself, was not clear as to its own aims. It simply intended to derive whatever advantage it could from its action at Agadir now that the step had been taken, committing itself and Europe to the mercy of events.

10

Without loss of time the Quai d'Orsay charged its ambassador in London to propose a joint naval demonstration by France and England in reply to the German, and at first before he had consulted his colleagues, Sir Edward Grey favoured the suggestion. But at a meeting held on July 4, the Cabinet refused to consider the immediate despatch of a British man-of-war to Agadir,[1] and was content to demand that England should be kept informed of the negotiations which should not, as Germany proposed, be confined to three powers, France, Spain and herself. Four powers,

[1] Is there any reason to think that King George exercised his personal influence in the same direction? See Metternich to Bethmann-Hollweg, September 25, 1911 (report of a conversation with the King at Balmoral) 'The King, while lamenting the position, observed that as a result of the grouping of the Powers (which he dislikes intensely) England was obliged to support France. But he had at least prevented the despatch of a British man-of-war to Agadir which would probably have led to war.' (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxix, p. 245.)

France, Germany, Spain and England must take part in any settlement. On July 6 Asquith, speaking in the House of Commons, simply stated in general terms but in accents of gravity that as regards the question which had just arisen in Morocco and for which he hoped diplomacy would discover a peaceful solution, England in the possible event of future developments affecting her interests more directly would adopt the attitude dictated by a 'due regard to the protection of those interests and to the fulfilment of our treaty obligations to France'.[1] As for the French Government, the very day on which the British Cabinet refused to send a battleship to Morocco Joseph Caillaux, temporarily in charge of the Foreign Office, energetically opposed the despatch of a French man-of-war. On this point, therefore, he was in agreement with Sir Edward Grey. But there the agreement ended. For Caillaux proposed to Berlin that negotiations should take place not between three powers as Germany had originally suggested, or between four as England demanded, but between two alone, France and Germany, for the amicable settlement of all questions in dispute between the two countries outside Europe. But he refused to put forward any definite proposals, waiting for Germany to make them.

They were made about the middle of July. Kiderlen-Wächter, the German Foreign Minister, offered France a free hand in Morocco and was even willing to consider the cession of Togo, if in return France would hand over to Germany her entire colony in the Congo. These proposals were revealed to the public by an article which appeared in the *Matin*, followed on July 20 by an article in *The Times*. It was easy to exploit these revelations against Germany. For, on the one hand, when England seven years earlier had given France a free hand in Morocco, she had asked for no territory in return but simply for the abandonment of certain rights. On the other hand, a right of pre-emption on the Belgian Congo was attached to the French colony. Would Germany receive this as well? Finally, though detailed information was lacking, the whole world knew of the agreement concluded twelve or thirteen years before between England and Germany by which the latter was given certain rather indefinite rights over the Portuguese colonies to the south of the Belgian Congo. It was evident that Germany intended to build up a vast

[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1911, 5th Series, vol. xxvii, p. 1341.

colonial empire in equatorial Africa. France was to give her what she wanted, and England to abstain from interference. Otherwise Germany would land troops at Agadir. And the British Government had been kept in complete ignorance of these proposals; the only information it had received had come from the Press. On July 21 Lloyd George, the guest of honour at a banquet of city financiers, speaking as the mouthpiece of the Cabinet made a formal protest against the attitude of the German Government. 'If a situation were to be forced upon us in which peace could only be preserved by the surrender of the great and beneficent position Britain has won by centuries of heroism and achievement, by allowing Britain to be treated where her interests were vitally affected as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of Nations, then I say emphatically that peace at that price could be a humiliation, intolerable for a great country like ours to endure. National honour is no party question.'[1]

II

Thus the great demagogue, the arch-enemy of a costly programme of naval expenditure, and the leading champion of a *rapprochement* between England and Germany, came forward in opposition to Germany as the mouthpiece of British patriotism and imperialism. On the Continent the speech made a profound impression. But its first effect in Germany was to irritate rather than intimidate. On the 25th the Ambassador, Metternich, made strong representations to Sir Edward Grey about a speech which violated the accepted code of diplomatic procedure. He assured

[1] Speech at the Mansion House—Sir A. Nicolson to Sir F. Cartwright, July 24, 1911: 'The speech of Lloyd George which, they tell you, was no sudden inspiration but a carefully thought-out one.' (*British Documents* . . . vol. vii, p. 396.) To what extent was Lloyd George the mouthpiece of his colleagues? The question has never been cleared up. According to Churchill (*The World Crisis*, pp. 46–7) he submitted the draft of his speech to Churchill, Asquith, and Grey in turn. So far as Grey is concerned, the statement has been confirmed by himself. (*Twenty-five Years 1892–1916*, vol. i, pp. 224–5.) Grey however states that he suggested no change in the wording but approved the speech as it stood. On the other hand what weight should we attach to a story which the Austrian Ambassador in Berlin heard from the Emperor, who in turn heard it from a Hamburg commercial magnate, who was his intimate friend (probably Ballin)? According to this story Lloyd George in the course of a conversation with the Emperor's informant excused himself by ascribing the entire responsibility for the invidious passage to his colleagues. Himself a stranger to foreign politics he had simply read the text put into his hands by Asquith and Grey. (Szögyény despatch from Berlin, December 19, 1911: *Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik*, vol. iii, pp. 698–9.)

the British Government that his Government had no intention of establishing itself in Morocco. But when Sir Edward proposed an international congress to resettle the Moroccan question he replied by demanding the simple restoration of the *status quo*,[1] which would do nothing to obviate the risks of an armed conflict between the French and the Germans. Already, the day before Lloyd George's speech, the English and French General Staffs had concerted the emergency measures to be taken.[2] On the 26th the newspapers informed the public that the Atlantic Squadron, instead of starting for its manœuvres in Norwegian waters, had received orders to concentrate at Portsmouth, and in spite of a reassuring official denial the conclusion was universally drawn that the Admiralty, foreseeing a rupture between France and Germany, was preparing for war.[3] On the 27th the Premier, speaking in the House of Commons, explained the attitude of the Government. Though it hoped that the conversations between France and Germany might lead to an agreement honourable and satisfactory to both parties, it could not remain passive if they broke down. England would be obliged to intervene because she was a party to the Pact of Algeciras, because she had made an agreement with France in 1904, and because her interests were affected. Balfour, the Unionist leader, gave the Prime Minister, as we should expect, his hearty support, and even Ramsay MacDonald, the Labour leader, felt himself obliged to introduce into the peroration of a pacifist speech a patriotic utterance. 'I do pray that no European nation will assume for a single moment that party divisions in this country will weaken the national spirit or national union.'[4]

If the immediate effect of Lloyd George's speech at Berlin had been an outburst of anger, after ten days of strain the conversations between France and Germany became at the beginning of August a piece of bargaining. And the Germans drove a hard

[1] Count von Metternich to von Kiderlen-Wächter, London, July 25, 1911. (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxix, p. 213.)

[2] Memorandum of Meeting held on July 20, 1911 between General Dubail and General Wilson. August 11, 1911 (*British Documents* . . . vol. vii, pp. 629 sqq.).

[3] In his memoirs General Macready adds a curious detail. 'So acute was the tension that on the 28th of July a subordinate officer in an access of nervous enthusiasm despatched telegrams to all record offices to the effect that clerks were to remain on duty night and day, in case mobilization should be suddenly ordered. Happily the *faux pas* was discovered and rectified before it became public property.' (*Annals of an Active Life*, vol. i, p. 161.)

[4] H. of C., July 27, 1911 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1911, 5th Series, vol. xxviii, p. 1831).

bargain: for if they abandoned their claim to the whole of the French Congo, they persisted in demanding, in spite of French opposition, an extension on the Atlantic Coast of their territory in the Cameroons and above all means of access to the Congo and Ubangi. While the French Foreign Minister was negotiating directly with the German Minister for Foreign Affairs through the French Ambassador at Berlin, the Prime Minister, Caillaux, was secretly conducting parallel negotiations through an unofficial channel. And the bargaining was complicated by the growing excitement of the patriotic Press in both countries which made it increasingly difficult to reach a compromise mutually acceptable. Throughout the negotiations Sir Edward Grey, regularly informed of their progress by the French, acted as a moderating influence. It was in vain that the Quai d'Orsay attempted to arouse his opposition to some particular German demand. He maintained that every demand for territorial compensation should be considered whether it were in Morocco itself, or in Equatorial Africa or, as it was suggested at one moment, in the Indian Ocean or the Pacific. The one thing that mattered was to prevent a rupture of the negotiations which would involve war—a war in which England would be obliged to participate—and not allow the French Foreign Office to make the British responsible for the rejection of any German claim. And the anxiety of the Foreign Office reached a climax when towards the middle of August the French Government became convinced, on evidence which it believed to be reliable, that the German Government was bent on war and communicated its fears to the British Government at a juncture when circumstances rendered the prospect particularly formidable for both countries.

For the diplomatic situation was unfavourable. Since Isvolsky's fall the Anglo-Russian *entente* seemed to be in process of dissolution. In Persia the English and Russians were at loggerheads almost as openly as the Germans and French in Morocco. And though the official declarations of the Russian Ambassadors in Paris and London were reassuring and the French and Russian staffs maintained close contact, indeed that very August a military convention was concluded between the two Powers, the Russian Government made a gesture whose meaning could not be doubted. It published on August 19 the agreement of Potsdam by which Russia consented to support the German construction

of the Bagdad railway on condition it were not extended into the zone of Persia assigned to Russia by the agreement of 1907. It was a deliberate reply to the Franco-German agreement of February 9, 1909, concluded when the Bosnian crisis was at its height. Then France had betrayed Russia. Now Russia betrayed France.

The domestic situation was also unsatisfactory. The struggle between the two Houses had indeed reached its conclusion on August 3. But though the final debates had been stormy the attention of the public was elsewhere, concentrated on the series of strikes, which after a temporary interruption about the beginning of July, broke out afresh with a violence hitherto unexperienced, in the port of London first, then at Liverpool. The workmen rioted, the troops were called out, there were shootings and deaths. And now the agitation spread to the railwaymen. 'War has begun', declared the Secretary of their Union:[1] not war between England and Germany, but the class war under the form of a general strike on the railways. It seemed a revival of the Englishman's Home acted by the entire nation.

12

On August 18 the morning papers prepared their readers for the imminent rupture of the Franco-German negotiations. The same day at the request of the general staff of the army and contrary to established usage, the House of Commons passed without debate the second and third readings of an Official Secrets Act which reinforced the powers of censorship possessed by the Government in the event of war.[2] The same day the Russian

[1] Keeling to Mrs. Townshend, August 18, 1911: 'The Strike is magnificent. Nothing else really matters' (Keeling, *Letters and Recollections*, p. 92).

[2] An Act to re-enact the Official Secrets Act, 1889 with amendments (*Official Secrets Act*, 1911). The first reading of the Bill had been passed the day before. Only one division had been taken, in which the Opposition mustered only ten votes as against 107. Among these seven besides Keir Hardie we notice the names of Lansbury, Henderson, MacDonald, and Snowden. But the division was concerned only with a point of detail. In substance the Bill was passed unanimously. (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1911, 5th Series, vol. xxix, pp. 2251 sqq.). For the pressure brought to bear upon the Speaker by all the members, and even from the Labour benches to induce him to accept this radical breach with constitutional custom see Major-General the Right Honourable J. E. B. Seely, *Adventure*, p. 144. In his reminiscences the Speaker passes over these difficulties with a majestic silence and mentions only the strike 'Just at this moment there was a general railway strike which mightily inconvenienced all holiday traffic and postponed for some days the adjournment; but the strike being temporarily settled, we rose for the autumn recess on the 22nd of August to meet again on the 24th of October. In the autumn I went to Scotland for some

Ambassadors in Paris and London informed the Governments to whom they were accredited that the Potsdam agreement would be made public on the following day. That same day the Cabinet made a desperate effort to prevent the general strike on the railways. Lloyd George took the railway directors and the trade-union officials into his confidence, and begged them in the national interest at a moment when the country was on the verge of war to effect a settlement. He was successful. The strike did not take place. And the menace of war also vanished. On the 22nd, Parliament was prorogued until October but on the following day, August 23, the Cabinet decided to call a meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence to discuss the general military situation in the event of war. The high command was very pessimistic about the Russian army. But it was optimistic, too optimistic some of the members of the Committee thought, as to the capacity of the French army to resist a German invasion with the help of a British expeditionary force. But what the Government chiefly wished to ascertain was whether the Admiralty and the War Office were working in harmony. In point of fact there was no co-operation or common policy.

As the result of a series of conversations begun in 1906, detailed arrangements had been made for joint action by the staffs of the British and French armies. But during these five years no communications had passed between the two Admiralties. How many soldiers should be sent to France, at which ports they should be embarked and disembarked and at what points they should be concentrated—on all these matters agreement had been reached on both sides of the Channel. But the crossing itself must be protected and not only had the Admiralty made no plans for this, it did not even wish to make any. For the British navy was opposed to the rapid despatch of an expeditionary force to the French front. It wanted complete freedom during the requisite period of weeks or months to seek out the German fleet and destroy it in a great battle which would be the twentieth century Trafalgar. This once accomplished and England once more mistress of the seas, the Admiralty had no objection to the despatch of a British

stalking and shooting' (Lord Ullswater, *A Speaker's Commentaries*, vol. i, p. 117). Keir Hardie in his account of the railway strike (*Killing no Murder! The Government and the Railway Strike*) makes no allusion to the danger of war. Lord Askwith (*Industrial Problems and Disputes*, p. 166) mentions it but gives us to understand that it was perhaps only a scare engineered by Lloyd George to make the companies and men come to terms.

force to the Continent. But it did not want the troops to be sent to France where the British army would help the French to win French victories. It wanted them sent to German territory, and landed on the coast of Hanover to win victories which would be exclusively English.[1] Thus the revelations published in the Paris Press on the occasion of the Tangier incident which had made a considerable sensation on the Continent were proved true. Sir Arthur Wilson, the First Sea Lord, explained the Admiralty's views to the Committee. McKenna defended the standpoint of the Navy. But this divergence of policy could not be permitted to continue without grave—possibly immediate—danger. Haldane pointed this out to his colleagues. Long weary of the War Office, where in his opinion there was nothing more for him to do, he had already attempted when the Cabinet was remodelled after Campbell-Bannerman's death to exchange it for the Exchequer. He had failed owing to the opposition of the Gladstonians in the Cabinet.[2] Now he asked for the Admiralty—and was faced no doubt by the same opposition.[3] But it was clear that McKenna was doomed, as Lord Tweedmouth had been doomed in 1908. Ten months later Churchill left the Home Office, where he was no longer a success, and took his place.

Once again at the beginning of September, war was believed to be imminent. The French Government, before deciding what territorial concessions it would be willing to make in Equatorial Africa, wanted to know what freedom of action Germany would concede in Morocco. A draft convention was laid before the German Government which replied by putting forward an agreement of a very different tenor. The German document proposed to set up an economic condominium throughout Morocco like that whose failure had brought the French army to Fez and the German fleet to Agadir, and which in the Sous district round Agadir would be a literal condominium, political as well as

[1] Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis 1911–14*, 1923, pp. 58–9. See also Lord Haldane's remarks reported by J. H. Morgan. 'The Riddle of Lord Haldane' (*Quarterly Review*, January 1929, vol. cdxc, p. 185). See also F. W. Roch, *Mr. Lloyd George and the War*, 1920, p. 47. Cf. Sir John Fisher to Lord Esher: 'The regular Army (as distinguished from the Home Army and the Indian Army) should be a projectile to be fired by the Navy' (Admiral Bacon, *Life of Lord Fisher*, vol. i, p. 206). The Same to the Same, September 20, 1911: 'I simply tremble at the consequences if the British Red Coats are to be planted on the Vosges Frontier' (Lord Fisher, *Memories*, p. 206).

[2] John Morgan, *John Viscount Morley, an Appreciation and Some Reminiscences*, 1924, p. 48.

[3] See F. W. Rich, *Lloyd George and the War*, 1920, p. 50. J. H. Morgan, 'The Riddle of Lord Haldane' (*Quarterly Review*, No. 499, January 1929, vol. cclxii, p. 185).

economic. The agreement was not acceptable either to France or to England; the negotiations reached a deadlock, and a final rupture; a German landing at Agadir and war were in sight. Germany and France made preparations for the event of war: Belgium mobilized. In London panic prevailed in naval circles when the Admiralty's scouts one day lost sight of the German fleet on the high seas. Would the German navy repeat on a large scale the blow of Chemulpo, by destroying one by one the vessels of the three British squadrons scattered to the south, east and north of Great Britain? In the utmost secrecy the War Office recalled officers and soldiers on leave and assembled the officers of the Territorial Army.[1] But for the third time the storm dispersed.

13

During forty years of European peace the nations had ceased to contemplate war as a serious possibility. Before their attitude could be so changed that war once more became a genuine likelihood, more years of nerve-wrecking tension were required and the equilibrium of Europe must be more profoundly disturbed. A financial crisis broke out in Germany at the beginning of September. It was due primarily to economic causes, but it was aggravated by the prospect of war and when the Bank of France forbade all export of gold it became evident to the whole world how solid still was the old structure of French capitalism, how weak the new structure of German industrialism. The advocates of peace once more gained the upper hand in Germany. They were assisted by the personal action of the Emperor William who had long opposed a naval demonstration in Moroccan waters, at the end had yielded with reluctance to his ministers' decision, and was delighted to be able to resume what a contemporary termed his 'fantastic dream of a *rapprochement* between France and Ger-

[1] See Captain Faber's revelations in a speech at Andover, November 9, 1911 (*Daily Telegraph*, November 20, 1911). According to another account the episode was even more dramatic. A British cruiser had encountered in British waters off the coast of Scotland the German high seas fleet drawn up in battle formation and preceded by its scouting vessels and torpedo-boat-destroyers. The German fleet had then been lost sight of and for this grave dereliction of duty two officers in high command had been dismissed from the Service. (W. Morgan Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia, a record of European Diplomacy*, 1912, p. 222.)

many'.[1] He was encouraged by the fact that the French Prime Minister thoroughly distrusted the Franco-British *entente*, was a convinced advocate of friendly relations with Germany, and ever since the end of August had been corresponding directly with the French Ambassador at Berlin over the head of his Foreign Minister. In September and October it was Caillaux, not de Selves, who was in charge of the negotiations.

In England the domestic situation improved. For the moment no strike on a large scale occurred. In October, however, the Commons reassembled to pass the National Insurance Bill and the debates on its clauses were sufficiently heated to fill the columns of the Press. On the other hand, at the end of September an Italian army suddenly invaded the Tripolitana and transferred the attention of journalists from Fez to Tripoli, and the war between Italy and Turkey involved the diplomatists of all the Great Powers in a labyrinth of new problems connected with the Mediterranean and the Balkans, in which they were slow to find their way. This enabled the conversations between France and Germany to be conducted more quietly unwatched by the public, and the French representatives went on gaining ground at the expense of the German. Instead of the entire French possessions in Equatorial Africa—though France it is true abandoned her claim to Togo—Germany obtained only some 63,000 square miles of territory, an enclave within the French colonies with two 'punctures' opening into the Ubanghi and Congo, through which France kept a right of transport. Moreover, she accepted a slight rectification of the frontier in favour of France in the region of Lake Chad. On the other hand, she gave France complete freedom 'to help the Government of Morocco to introduce the administrative, judicial, economic, fiscal, and military reforms necessary for the good government of the empire.' The purpose of this concession was, in the language of the official text, to 'carry out in the general interest the work of pacification and progress contemplated by the pact of Algeciras'. In reality, the convention departed from the provisions of that instrument of internationalization, as is clear from an explanatory letter Kiderlen appended to the document which stated 'that if ever the French Government should see fit to declare a protectorate of Morocco the Imperial Government would raise no objection'.

[1] Lieutenant-Colonel Pellé to M. Messimy, Minister for War, December 16, 1911. (*Documents diplomatiques français, 1871–1914*, 3rd Series, 1911–14, vol. i, p. 346.).

We can well imagine the feelings with which Germany received the agreement of November 4. The despatch of the *Panther* to Agadir in July had been an imprudent step because of the hopes it had inevitably aroused. The German public were confident that their country would claim her share in Morocco and was strong enough to obtain it or in default of a portion of Morocco would receive elsewhere concessions so important that in the eyes of the world they would represent a striking diplomatic success. As we have seen, these expectations were disappointed. The minister for the colonies resigned rather than put his signature to an agreement he regarded as treason to his country's interests. The Emperor, always suspected with good reason of favouring a policy of *rapprochement* with France, found himself attacked by a clique at court of which the Crown Prince put himself at the head and by a large section of the Press and public. An epidemic of Anglophobia and Gallophobia traversed Germany.

What is more surprising, the agreement was equally unpopular in France. What, the public asked, was the meaning of these two outlets pushed forward to the Ubanghi and Congo by the new German territory? Were they only fragments of what Germany had hoped to receive and had renounced or were they stakes planted for a future claim? Had Germany even abandoned all claim to a pre-emption on the Belgian Congo? An ambiguous clause of the agreement left the point doubtful. Finally, the publication of the secret clauses of the Franco-British *entente* of 1904 respecting Morocco revealed that in return for the territory she renounced on the Congo France was to receive not the whole of Morocco but Morocco without the Riff, which was assigned to Spain. Nor was it simply on these points of detail that complaints were raised. The public took offence at the very idea of territorial compensation. Accustomed by now to the *entente cordiale* and encouraged, if not by the British Government, at least by an entire group of English diplomatists and journalists, French public opinion considered that England was under an obligation to help France to obtain everything she had promised her in 1904 and that with England's aid she was strong enough to secure it. Moreover, the despatch of the *Panther* to the harbour of Agadir had produced the same bad effect in Paris as in Berlin; since July every territorial concession made by France was regarded as extorted from the weaker by the more powerful nation. The negotiations

had been conducted during the recess of the Chambers, a circumstance which had considerably facilitated the negotiators' task. The position changed when the Chambers reassembled and were invited to ratify the agreements. Popular feeling displays surprising changes of front. Six years before, the Chambers had overthrown Delcassé because he had committed France too far to the *entente cordiale*, which they regarded as dangerous and Rouvier, the champion of a *rapprochement* with Germany, had been victorious. Now Caillaux was pursuing the same policy as Rouvier then. And he was employing the same method of secret negotiations behind the back of his Foreign Minister. Moreover, he had been more successful than Rouvier had been, for the Imperial Government had conceded to him what it had refused to Rouvier as well as to Delcassé and liberated France from the shackles imposed upon her action in Morocco by the pact of Algeciras. Nevertheless, it was upon his head, as then upon Delcassé's that the Chambers discharged the vials of their wrath. In January he would be driven from office and with his fall French foreign policy would change its attitude once more.

14

Thus the agreement of November 4, far from improving the relations between France and Germany, made them worse. English opinion in turn took fire and as in Germany and France retrospectively, when a series of sensational revelations informed the country that on two or three occasions during the previous summer it had been on the brink of war. Without its knowledge was the bitter comment of advanced Liberal critics, and not to defend any British interest but simply to give France another colony. They severely censured Sir Edward Grey's policy. They depicted England as a nation sacrificed to the superstition of the European balance of power—a catspaw serving everywhere the interests of foreign nations, in the Near East betrayed by Russian imperialism, in the West drawn by French nationalism further than she desired to go. Arthur Ponsonby, a democrat of noble birth and a violent opponent of the *entente* with Russia, published a pamphlet which made a stir by demanding that foreign policy

should be subject at every step to popular control.[1] These Liberal critics of the Government were not a large group but they were zealous propagandists and their arguments produced an obvious effect upon the entire party. Even certain Conservatives, burdened by taxation and alarmed by the spread of labour unrest, began to ask themselves whether Grey's policy were not in certain respects imprudent and whether it was wise to surrender the foreign policy of the country blindly into his hands. The *Standard*, an organ of orthodox Toryism and until the middle of November extremely hostile to Germany, suddenly changed its tone about that date and began a campaign in favour of a *rapprochement* with Berlin.[2] While approving the policy pursued by the Foreign Office, Bonar Law, the new leader of the Unionist party in the Commons, and Lord Lansdowne, the leader of the Opposition in the Lords, made the same criticism of the Government. Both blamed Grey for having on July 26th left it to Lloyd George to state the British attitude in the Moroccan dispute. They hinted that the interference of a demagogue had been prejudicial to the cause of peace.[3]

Unquestionably, these attacks upon the policy pursued by the Foreign Office and these expressions of a desire for a *rapprochement* with Germany were sincere. But it is equally certain that taken as a whole they were deliberately or unconsciously ambiguous.

'We were not aware', the malcontents complained, 'that we were so near war. The Government deceived and betrayed us.' Was this true? Lloyd George's speech in July was certainly the reverse of secret diplomacy and the naval preparations which followed were published in the Press. On the other hand, not a syllable had appeared in the Press about the panic of August or the true nature of the ministerial intervention which ended the railway strike. Neither had a syllable appeared about the panic in September and the military measures adopted at that time. But is it credible that all those in the confidence of the Government—

[1] *Democracy and the Control of Foreign Affairs*, 1912. This pamphlet of thirty pages may be regarded as the source from which were derived both the title and programme of the Union of Democratic Control formed in November 1914 to protest against the war with Germany whose leaders would play such an important part in British policy after the war when German naval power had been destroyed.

[2] Cf. in the November number of the *Fortnightly Review* the article entitled 'Sir Edward Grey's Stewardship' and Sir Sidney Low's article 'An Anglo-French Alliance'. (New Series, vol. xc, pp. 963 sqq., 999 sqq.).

[3] H. of C., November 27, 1911 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1911, 5th Series, vol. xxxii, pp. 70 sqq.) H. of L., November 28, 1911 (*Parl. Deb.*, Lords 1911, 5th Ser., vol. x, pp. 392 sqq.).

in September there were a host of them—kept such strict silence that not a single newspaper was informed? The silence of the entire Press—Radical as well as Unionist—a deliberate silence, inspired by the patriotic wish not to embarrass the Government. The country did not know because it refused to know. There is an ignorance whose true name is connivance.

'Yes,' Grey's critics replied, 'we refused to know because on the particular issue we were bound to France by the agreement of 1904. But the question of Morocco, the only question on which we pledged ourselves to her, has now been settled in her favour. In future, whatever dispute may arise between France and Germany our liberty is complete. We are perfectly free, if we wish, to remain neutral or even side with Germany.' Here again we must ask: Was it true? Was it really the conflict between France and Germany in Morocco which divided England and Germany, and opposed the British to the German navy? On the contrary, if England, instead of disputing the possession of Morocco with France, as she would have done had Germany remained a nation without a navy, decided to abandon Morocco to her, was it not in order to protect herself against the new danger presented by the appearance on the high seas of a powerful German fleet? And was that danger less after Agadir than before Tangier? Would Germany desist from building giant ironclads because the Moroccan question had been settled to her disadvantage? The important speech Sir Edward Grey delivered in the House of Commons on November 27 to defend his policy contained only a single sentence dealing with the naval problem, but it is the key to the entire speech. It was impossible, he pointed out, to return to the policy of 'splendid isolation'. It would ally all the powers of Europe against England. 'In the course of a few years, we should be building warships not against a Two-Power Standard, but probably against the united navies of Europe.' The Foreign Office therefore continued unmoved the policy it had pursued for the last six years, in the certainty that it represented the fundamental interest and the genuine will of the British people. But at the same time it took account of the fact that the policy of the Triple Entente aroused in the country misgivings by no means devoid of foundation and that in the years to come that policy would have to be pursued under stormier skies and in more difficult circumstances than hitherto.

PART III

ON THE BRINK OF THE CATASTROPHE

CHAPTER I

Domestic Anarchy

I THE SYNDICALIST REVOLT

1

NOW that the Parliament Bill had been passed, what use would the Government make of it? Which Bill would it choose to carry for the first time in 1912, for the second in 1913, if the House of Lords threw it out in 1912, and if again the Lords opposed their veto, for the third time in 1914, then however definitely and without appeal? A Home Rule Bill was introduced, as everyone expected. For the hour had come to pay for the support which since January 1910 the eighty or so Irish Nationalists had unswervingly given the Government, and it was this Bill as everyone equally expected, that would prove the storm centre on which the party struggle would concentrate its force. A Welsh Disestablishment Bill was introduced at the same time. The thirty Welsh Radicals whose leader Lloyd George had been before he became the great popular leader and prominent statesman of the entire country, like the Irish Nationalists wanted their reward and the disestablishment of the State Church in their little principality was the symbol of their desire for devolution. For the Welsh Nonconformists constituted three-quarters of the Welsh people and regarded the Welsh Anglicans as representatives of an alien Church forced upon Wales from without. Once already in 1909 the Liberal Government had introduced a Bill to abolish the privileges of the Anglican Church in Wales, but there had been no time to discuss it. Now the path was free. The Bill of 1912 provided that the four Welsh dioceses should no longer form part of the province of Canterbury, the Welsh Bishops should no longer sit in the House of Lords, all ecclesiastical jurisdiction should be abolished and the laws of the Anglican Church should be held binding in Wales only in virtue of the tacit consent of the Welsh Anglicans, who would, moreover, be free to hold synods and set up a representative body to govern their Church. These measures of disestablishment were accompanied by measures of disendowment. The church buildings and all gifts made to the Church since 1662 were left in her hands. Of the

remaining endowments a quarter would be given to the University of Wales, three-quarters to the County Councils to be spent on public services and particularly on poor relief. The Bill was bitterly attacked by the Unionist party, which was the accredited defender of the Church of England and witnessed with alarm the Church in process of dismemberment. But the country as a whole took no interest in the question. It was quite clear that the Bill, which the Lords threw out in two successive sessions, would become law at the time fixed by the Parliament Act, if the Liberal Government remained in office so long.

Both Bills be it noticed—the important Bill to grant Home Rule to Ireland and the minor Bill to disestablish the Church in Wales—were intended to satisfy local sections of the United Kingdom, neither of which was in the true sense English. Was nothing to be done for England herself, or for the United Kingdom as a whole? To begin with the Government might fulfil the promise contained in the preamble to the Parliament Bill and reform the House of Lords after restricting its powers. But it was content with repeating the promise and never kept it. Neither party really desired the reform in question and the country did not demand it. Instead a Franchise and Registration Bill was introduced to effect such a reform of the franchise that England should be at last what France had been since 1848 and the German Empire since its creation in 1871, a country of universal suffrage. For even now universal suffrage did not exist in England. In 1910 out of twelve million adult males in the United Kingdom only some seven million seven hundred were voters.[1] This left over

[1] *Parliamentary Constituencies (Electors, etc.) (United Kingdom)—Return showing with regard to each parliamentary constituency in the United Kingdom, the total number and, as far as possible, the number of each class of electors on the Register for the year 1910; and also showing the population and inhabited houses of each constituency, 1910*—For an estimate of the number of adults who did not possess the vote, which the nature of the British franchise makes it extremely difficult to calculate, see the very different results reached by contemporaries: H. of C., February 12, 1908. The Attorney-General's speech. There were 7,250,000 on the register as opposed to the 10,000,000 who should be there, if, as would be the case under a system of adult male suffrage, a quarter of the population possessed the franchise. (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxxiv, p. 143.) H. of C., January 23, 1913, Asquith's speech: an electorate of 7,500,000 to 8,000,000; 2,000,000 or 2,500,000 adult males without a vote (*Parl. Deb.*, Commons, 1913, 5th Ser., vol. xlvii, p. 653). Cf. A. Lawrence Lowell, *The Government of England*, 1908, vol. i, p. 213. Price Collier, *England and the English*, 1909. (Popular edition 1911, p. 288) gives the figure of 700,000 adult males without the franchise, a gross underestimate. L. G. Chiozza Money (*Things that Matter . . .* 1914, pp. 189 sqq.), taking into account the plural vote and the lodgers who did not take the trouble to have their names placed on the register, estimated at 38.6 per cent the proportion of adult males not on the register.

four million adult males without the vote. And those four million comprised not only lunatics, prisoners, and men deprived of the franchise for offences at common law, but also paupers in the technical sense, that is to say all in receipt of poor relief. They also included other categories which the motley and complicated franchise established by the successive Reform Bills of the nineteenth century had left without a vote. A man-servant who lived in his master's house, a son who lived with his father had no vote, though a gardener or gamekeeper had because he had a separate lodging. A lodger, who paid for his lodging a rent not below ten pounds, could vote. But was the workman who sublet a room from a lodger himself a lodger within the meaning of the law? On this point legal decisions conflicted, so that the British franchise was not only limited but also uncertain.[1] Moreover the registers were revised only once a year: an official whose promotion was rapid, a labourer obliged to change his place of abode frequently to obtain work, were therefore often unable to claim a vote. In consequence, moreover, of the plural vote the franchise operated unfairly in favour of the rich. Anyone who possessed several places of residence, business premises and a dwelling-house or a town and a country house had a vote for each of these. There were, it was calculated, over half a million plural voters in the United Kingdom. They were particularly numerous in the London district, where their vote had, in January 1910, it was estimated, cost seven or eight Liberal candidates their seat.[2] We have already noticed the Government's attempt to correct the anomaly in 1907. It had been defeated by the opposition of the Lords.

When in 1908 Asquith became Prime Minister, he seems to have thought of making a general reform of the franchise the battlefield between the two Houses.[3] Lloyd George and Churchill

[1] The registers were compiled, so far as 'the lodgers' franchise' was concerned, by Revising Barristers, subject to no control except the check exercised by the party agents, who could appeal to the Court of King's Bench. See Michael MacDonagh 'The Making of Parliament' (*Nineteenth Century and After*, No. 347, January 1906, vol. lix, p. 31). On this and many other points the impartiality of the judge who had to decide the validity or invalidity of an election was not always above suspicion. See the incident of the Yarmouth Election Petition and Judge Grantham's decision, May 4, 1906. The public after a little grumbling accepted it. But the matter was re-opened when in January 1911 Grantham violating every precedent attempted to justify his decision by maintaining that his colleague Judge Channell who had differed from his opinion was suffering from an enfeeblement of his mental powers. Asquith protested. H. of C., February 8, 1911. (*Parl. Deb.*, Commons, 1911, 5th Ser., vol. xxi, p. 291.)

[2] Ramsay Muir, *Peers and Bureaucrats*, 1900, p. 122.

[3] Speech at the Reform Club, May 21, 1908.

disagreed and he gave way. That their opposition was justified was shown by what happened four years later when the Cabinet decided, now that the House of Lords had been reduced to impotence, to take up the matter afresh. The Franchise and Registration Bill of 1912 set up a uniform franchise, based exclusively on residence, which in turn was defined by occupation, reduced to six months the interval between the revisions of the register and abolished the plural vote.[1] But the Bill which, without actually establishing universal suffrage, would, it was estimated, extend the franchise to some two million five hundred thousand new electors was dropped amid universal indifference. The debates which began in July in the Commons with a scanty attendance were soon broken off. 'Once or twice in the course of the debate', wrote a journalist ironically, 'quotations from Bright or Disraeli served to remind us that there had been a time when great men were interested in a Bill for parliamentary reform.'[2]

2

How are we to explain this indifference? In the first place, those who were deprived of the vote were not in a position to form a body of malcontents. They were in part the dregs of the population, below the social stratum which produced conscious revolutionaries. And in part, owing to the anomalies of the existing franchise, they were a medley of scattered individuals who formed neither an economic class nor a political party. Neither the Liberals nor the Unionists had a strong interest in effecting a final extension of the franchise. The Liberal agents did indeed want the plural vote abolished, but that was too restricted a reform to arouse the enthusiasm of the masses. Even the trade unions were not particularly dissatisfied with the existing franchise. The events which had occurred since 1906 had proved how powerful already, even without an extension of the suffrage, was the pressure they could exercise upon Parliament. Even those workers for whom the measures of social legislation passed during the last five years were not enough did not blame an insufficiently democratic

[1] For the details of the Government Bill see H. of C., June 17, 1912—J. A. Pease's speech (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 1912, 5th Series, vol. xxxix, pp. 1325 sqq.).
[2] *The Times*, July 19, 1912.

franchise; they attacked the system of representative government and parliamentary democracy. At the opening of the century the British workers had believed that the attack made upon them by a judicature in alliance with the employers could not be met by the direct action of the trade unions alone, and that political action was required. They had therefore listened to the appeal of the Socialists and formed a Labour party to defend their interests in Parliament. After ten years many of them, particularly among the younger men, were dissatisfied with the results obtained by this method.

The Socialists had hoped to defeat the bourgeois policy pursued by the secretaries of the great unions, which dominated the annual meeting of the Trade Union Congress. But the union officials were a very powerful body and the new Labour party had been obliged to place them in control of its organization. The Labour party in the Commons consisted therefore, as we have seen, entirely or almost entirely of trade union leaders, whose attitude now that they were provided with the political labour ticket remained what it had been before the party had been created. They were the very opposite of revolutionaries, sharing on all questions of foreign policy and general politics the opinions of the advanced Radicals and differing from the Radicals of bourgeois origin only by their more professional and therefore more conservative spirit. Unable to find in their own ranks a man with the stature of a party leader (Keir Hardie was a dreamer and they were seeking a pretext to shelve him), they finally turned to the only or almost the only man in their ranks who had not been a manual labourer. But Ramsay MacDonald was not the man to give the impression either in the House of Commons or in the country that the advent of the Labour party meant the birth of a new world. He had few friends and few enemies, was in fact nothing more than a prominent Member of Parliament who was appointed in 1912 to sit on an important commission of inquiry into the government of British India and who, if report were correct, was plotting a coalition with the Radical left wing. In that coalition Lloyd George, not he, would have been the outstanding figure.

Nevertheless, all the important measures of social reform which had been passed, had been passed, it seemed, under pressure from the Labour vote. The Conservative and Liberal Members of Parliament were equally afraid of seeing the Labour party win seats at their expense if they did not pass such measures. But what-

ever benefit the workers derived from these Statutes they did not make the Labour party more popular with the masses. To carry them out an entire bureaucracy had to be called into existence. To fill the posts thus created the Government had not instituted a system of examinations like that which protected the other branches of the Civil Service against favouritism in every form. The Cabinet appointed its nominees. What sort of people had hastened to apply for all these new appointments? They were not solely, nor even principally, Liberal politicians. The ministers had considered themselves justified in utilizing the practical experience of labour possessed by the trade union officials. It was also a clever move to conciliate by this largess the favour of the Labour party. The Trade Board Acts had necessitated the creation of 800 posts whose salaries reached in some cases £1,000 a year. There was a deluge of applications.[1]

Richard Bell, the Secretary of the Railwaymen's Union, who had been dismissed by his union in disgrace, was appointed superintendent of the Labour Exchanges at a salary of £400 a year. In 1910 Churchill created at the Home Office two new posts of Labour Advisers, one of which he gave to an old official of the Textile Workers' Union, Shackleton, the other to the Welsh miner, T. Richards, and thirty posts of sub-inspectors of mines and quarries, to be reserved for miners and quarrymen.[2] In 1911 the passing of the National Insurance Bill brought with it another batch of official posts to satisfy the hunger of trade union officials.[3]

[1] H. of C., September 28, 1909, Churchill's speech: '. . . The staff of all grades . . . will be somewhat over 800. . . . Probably only about a quarter or a third will be appointed during the present financial year' (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1909, 5th Series, vol. xi, pp. 1075–76). September 27, 1909: 'A great mass of applicants are coming in daily. Altogether nearly 4,000 have been received and they are coming in at about the rate of 200 a day. I have had to organize a small staff for the simple purpose of docketting, filing, and answering the applicants' (ibid., p. 921). Cf. 5th *Report* of H.M.'s Civil Service Commissioners with Appendices, 1911, p. 11—Old civil servants were afraid that these newcomers would be promoted over their heads. (H. of C., October 8, 1909, Sir William Bull's question; *Parl. Deb.*, Commons 1909, 5th Ser., vol. xl, p. 2461.) Cf. *Standard*, October 8, 1907, *Nation*, July 15, 1911, p. 576.

[2] *The Times*, November 12, 13, 1910.

[3] *Royal Commission on Civil Service. Fourth Report of Commissioners*, 1914, p. 25: 'This system of appointment has recently been adopted to some extent for the purpose of recruiting officials under the National Health Insurance Act. It claims—and herein lies its essential character—to determine the comparative fitness of candidates by an appraisement, through personal interview, supplemented by testimonials, of their qualities of education and intelligence. Examination is often dispensed with, or, if used at all, is used only as a qualifying test. Substantially, the system of appointment is selection by patronage, the abuses of patronage, being, it is claimed, precluded by the substitution of a Board or Committee of Selection for the Patron. It makes a new departure in recruitment for the Civil Service, which calls for the most careful examination.'

At the beginning of 1912 Bonar Law charged the Liberal Government with having created within five or six years some four to five thousand new administrative posts to be filled, in the majority of cases, without competitive examination and having thus organized a political spoils system which already resembled that of the United States.[1] A year later labour statistics proved that in the last six years places had been found at the Board of Trade for 117 active union workers at a total salary of £25,240 a year, for 124 in the National Insurance Departments at a total salary of £33,700, for forty-eight at the Home Office at a total salary of £13,600, and for eighty-five in other branches of the Civil Service at a total salary of £34,800.

Worse still, since the judgment of the courts in the Osborne case had precluded the trade unions from employing part of their funds for political purposes and in particular from paying their Parliamentary representatives a salary on which to live while in the service of the House, the Cabinet in compensation abandoned the principle that the representatives of the nation should be unpaid and passed a resolution in accordance with which the House voted every member of the Commons an annual salary of £400.[2] In 1912[3] a new Statute expressly conferred on the trade unions the right to spend their funds for political objects with the reservation —destined to remain a dead letter—that the political fund of a union should be a special fund, to which individual members should be free to refuse their subscription. The Members of Parliament kept their salary all the same. The union official would perhaps no longer be so completely the servant of his union, kept in the strictest tutelage as he had been hitherto. Henceforward a path of escape was open and the ambitious workman could promise himself after some years of toil and bondage, a fixed salary—of which his class could not deprive him, at least for the

[1] Speech at the Albert Hall, January 26, 1912.

[2] H. of C., August 10, 1911 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1911, vol. xxix, pp. 1365 sqq.). The first session under the Liberal Government had hardly opened in 1906 when the members of the majority urged that Election expenses should be defrayed by the State and not by the candidate, that members' letters should be franked and that they should receive a salary of £300 (H. of C., March 1, 1906). J. N. Barnes' question. March 6, 1906, J. Rowlands' motion, March 7, 1906, H. Lever's motion (*Parl. Deb.*, 4th Ser., vol. clii, p. 1310; vol. cliii, pp. 388 sqq.; pp. 522 sqq.). Both motions had been passed by the Commons and the ministers had declared themselves favourable in principle to the proposals, simply asking for the necessary time to give effect to the vote of the majority. Actually, nothing was done until 1912.

[3] 2 & 3 Geo. V., Cap. 30: An Act to amend the Law with respect to the objects and powers of Trade Unions (*Trade Union Act*, 1913).

life of one Parliament if he got into the House of Commons—for life, if having forfeited the approval of his union or failed to secure re-election he had contrived to obtain a post at the Board of Trade or Home Office. All this is sufficient to explain on the part of all those active workers in the cause of labour who had secure berths in the Civil Service, and of those masses of trade unionists whose sole ambition was to improve the conditions of their labour, a growing distrust and contempt for 'politics'.[1]

Even the material advantages the workers derived from the new legislation aroused no feelings of gratitude. The little they obtained merely encouraged them to demand far more. They observed that of all the measures passed up to 1911, only one, the Act of 1909 on Trade Boards, dealt with the question of wages, and it was a very timid measure, and the last of the series, the National Insurance Act, imposed a compulsory payment out of wages. But it was the question of wages which in the economic situation of the country interested the working class more than any other. We must once more insist on the extraordinary industrial prosperity of the years immediately preceding the war. The crisis of 1908 had been overcome. Imports had risen from £542,600,000 in 1903 (the year in which Chamberlain opened his campaign in favour of tariff reform) to £592,933,000 in 1908, and exports during the same period from £360,374,000 to £456,728,000. Neither the revolutionary Budget of 1909 nor two years of constitutional conflict, nor the cloud which twice

[1] For the bad effects of the Government's policy on the organization of the tutorial classes (for these classes see Book I, p. 88–90) see Albert Mansbridge, *University Tutorial Classes: A Study in the Development of Higher Education among Working Men and Women*, 1913, p. 56: 'The actual number of students who have accepted appointments as Labour Exchange Officials or in connection with the Insurance Act is not to hand, but the effect is considerable. Several classes have, in this way, lost secretaries and replaced them by, to say the least of it, less efficient men.' And Mansbridge without actually condemning a system of recruitment which presents its advantages and is often necessary expresses the wish that 'as few students in tutorial classes as possible should obtain appointments in the public service by virtue of their having been in such classes'. Cf. A. P. Orage, *National Guilds*, 1914, pp. 217–18: 'It is not generally realized how successfully the present Government has sterilized the Socialist and Labour Movement by enlisting in the ranks of the bureaucracy energetic young Fabians as well as prominent political Socialists and Labour leaders. Large posts in London, smaller posts in the provinces. . . . The accession to the ranks of the Civil Service of a certain number of men alleged to be democrats has, of course, in no way democratized Downing Street and its purlieus. Classification still rules, appointments to the first class still being the perquisite of the universities. In this way the bureaucratic organization is securely linked to the governing classes; they worship the same God; their tone, manners, and ambition derive from the same source. It is not, therefore, surprising that the British bureaucracy is regarded by the bulk of the working population as an element of oppression.'

overhung international relations, had prevented the country growing more prosperous. Imports had risen to £624,705,000 in 1909, £678,257,000 in 1910 and £680,158,000 in 1911, exports to £469,525,000 in 1909, £534,146,000 in 1910 and £556,878,000 in 1911. In 1912, in spite of a serious social conflict at home and the outbreak in the Balkans of a war which threatened to become universal, imports reached £744,641,000, exports £598,961,000. It was no use for the Tariff Reformers to argue that the favourable impression produced by these figures was illusory and that when prices were continually rising an increase in the value of exports did not mean an increase in the amount of goods exported. The calculations of the free traders proved that exports had increased not only in value but in amount. But if there seemed little to justify the claims of the Tariff Reformers, it was very different with the claims of the Socialists, or to use a less theoretical term, of Labour.

The workers were justified in pointing out that the employers profited more than themselves by this rise in prices. It is true their wages rose but not in proportion to the rise in the cost of food and other necessities of life; or, to speak more strictly, the rise in wages always lagged behind the increased cost of living.[1] And how did the workers obtain the increase in their wages, such as it was? Political action obviously effected nothing. The workers must bring direct pressure to bear on the employers. An important Statute had been passed in 1906, snatched by fear from the politicians of the older parties. It was the Act which had legalized peaceful picketing and freed the unions from all financial liability. After years of restricted action, the working class was once more free to wield against the employers the only efficacious weapon at its disposal, not the vote but the strike.

The movement of discontent among the working class was inevitably accompanied by the revival of an extremist policy among the Socialist leaders. Its first symptom had been the elec-

[1] For the fall in real wages see *Abstract of Labour Statistics, Board of Trade (Labour Department) Fifteenth Abstract of Labour Statistics in the United Kingdom*, 1912, pp. 70, 152. According to this calculation wages rose between 1895 and 1910 from 88.23 to 99.70 while the retail price of articles of food in London rose from 93.2 to 109.9. L. G. Chiozza Money, *Things that Matter. Papers upon Subjects which are or ought to be under Discussion*, 1912, Chap. i: 'The Recent Fall in Real Wages,' also Chap. xxiii: 'The Rise in the Poverty Line' (pp. i, sqq.; 252 sqq.) gives reasons for believing that the fall in real wages in England was probably greater than one would gather from the official figures. See also for the more restricted sphere of the railways Charles Watney and James A. Little (*Industrial Warfare, The Aims and Claims of Capital and Labour*, 1912, pp. 50 sqq.).

tion of Victor Grayson to Parliament in 1907. After this the extremists seemed to have lost ground, a phenomenon to which the depression which followed the economic crisis of 1908 and the effect produced by the policy of social reform favoured by Lloyd George and Churchill undoubtedly contributed. But it soon became evident that this was no more than a truce. When British Socialism at last acquired a daily newspaper, the *Daily Herald*,[1] it was an organ of the left wing, to which the official party in vain opposed a rival organ, the *Daily Citizen*. At the universities and in certain public schools it became fashionable for an increasing number of young men, readers of Bernard Shaw and Wells, to call themselves Socialists. Under the auspices of Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation, now the 'Social Democratic Party', after the policy of co-operation with the official Labour party had been given up, a Socialist Representation Committee was formed in 1909 and at a Socialist Unity Conference, held on September 30 and October 1, it was decided to found a British Socialist party which would combine the old adherents of Social Democracy with the youthful left wing of the Labour party.[2] The new party of doctrinaires was founded with a great flourish of trumpets but the enthusiasm was somewhat artificial. For what after all did Hyndman propose? To found yet another political group. But if history taught any lesson, did it not prove that the new party would inevitably go the same way as the Labour party, already to all appearance discredited? The men who were the life and soul of the new left wing were disciples of a different school opposed to all political action and therefore in harmony with the present attitude of the working class, a school not like Marxian Socialism of German origin but hailing from France.

3

To understand the origins of this new doctrine we must go back to the time when in 1870 two opposing groups contested the control of the First International, the respective supporters of the German, Karl Marx, and of the Russian, Bakunin. To Marx's

[1] For the beginnings of the *Daily Herald* see George Lansbury, *My Life*, 1928.

[2] A. W. Humphrey, *A History of Labour Representation*, 1912, pp. 182 sqq. M. Beer, *Geschichte des Sozialismus in England*, 1913, pp. 496 sqq.

authoritarian Communism which looked to a centralized State to expropriate the capitalist class, the latter opposed a freer and, they argued, more flexible doctrine to which amongst others they gave the name of 'anarchism'. Bakunin's movement, for a time very powerful in the Latin countries, finally failed, and the 'anarchist' groups disintegrated into a number of isolated individuals who, renouncing collective action of any kind, confined themselves to individual propaganda, by book, newspaper, and also—to use their own phrase—'by deed'—that is to say, by assassination. Nevertheless, they soon became more numerous. In France they made their way into the '*Bourses de Travail*'—through the *Bourses* into the trade unions which originally Jules Guesde had affiliated to his orthodox Marxian party. They finally built up out of the unions an organization based on what they termed 'revolutionary syndicalism'.[1] According to them parliamentary politics demoralized the representatives of labour, made them lose their class consciousness, and distracted their attention to religious, national, and constitutional questions which had nothing to do with the sole question in which the workers had an interest—the social question. Militant Socialists therefore should not enter the Chamber or hold any official post except the post of secretary to a trade union, in which capacity they should organize in the factories 'direct action' against the employers, passing from dispute to dispute, from strike to strike, at every step strengthening the workers' control and reducing the profits of capital until the day when a universal revolutionary strike should complete the expropriation of the capitalists and the body of workers organized in the '*Confederation Generale du Travail*' set up, by their unaided efforts and without any help from the State, the free republic of producers.

From France the doctrine spread to Spain and Italy, then crossed the frontiers of the Latin countries to reach Holland, Scandinavia, and the English-speaking world: In the United States it became the creed of the organization entitled 'The Industrial Workers of the World'.[2] In the States the proletariat was itself divided into two classes. On the one hand, there was a class of highly-paid workers, the aristocracy of the proletariat, strongly organized in trade unions who by amicable agreements periodically concluded

[1] [From the French syndicat=Trade Union. Trs. Note.]

[2] For the Industrial Workers of the World see the extremely erudite study by Paul Frederick Brissenden, *The I.W.W. A Study of American Syndicalism*, 1917 (for the French influence which however Mr. Brissenden is inclined to underestimate see pp. 272 sqq.).

had concluded a species of alliance between capital and labour. On the other hand there was a class of unskilled labourers usually consisting of American citizens not of Teutonic race, which was shamelessly exploited by the employers with the connivance of the more fortunate workers. The Industrial Workers of the World incited the latter to form revolutionary organizations or rather a single organization, one big union, which could launch a frontal attack on the employers and effect the social revolution by a universal strike. The American workers were in constant touch with Ireland and an Irishman named Connolly, attracted by a doctrine calculated to appeal to a turbulent race, brought back to his native country the theories of the Industrial Workers of the World.[1]

Meanwhile these doctrines spread in Australia where a powerful Labour party existed, which already controlled the great cities, held office in many of the States, and hoped to gain possession of the Commonwealth Government. Owing to its very success it had ceased to be a revolutionary party, had found itself compelled to subordinate the class interests of the proletariat to the interests of Australian society as a whole, and even to repress strikes. Here therefore the soil was favourable to the growth of syndicalist ideas. Parliamentary government, State action, were shams, and the strikers betrayed by the politicians naturally came to regard the strike as the only efficacious lawful instrument of liberation. Here the Industrial Workers of the World came into contact with some Englishmen, jetsam of abortive Socialist agitations who were stranded in Australia. There were champions of the Social Democratic Federation; there were Ben Tillett and Tom Mann, the former originally a transport worker, the latter from the engineering trade, who in 1889 had both taken an active part in revolutionary strikes in London. Tillett and Mann had then been in their way important men. Forgotten now, they were attracted by the prospect of making their reappearance in England armed with the doctrine they had discovered at the antipodes. In turn they came back to Europe. An English militant, by name Guy Bowman, in close contact with the French Revolutionaries, who had translated a book by Gustave Herve and was trying to introduce the syndicalist agitation into England, sent them to Paris to receive orders from the leaders of the movement. So quickly in

[1] See his book, *Socialism Made Easy*, 1909 also his biography by Desmond Ryan, *James Connolly, His Life, Work and Writings* with a preface by H. W. Nevinson, 1924.

the twentieth century do ideas encircle the globe.[1] On November 26, 1910, at Manchester 200 delegates representing some seventy groups, sixteen trade councils, and 60,000 workers, founded the Manchester Syndicalist Education League which immediately launched a campaign of propaganda by lectures, pamphlets, and books. The Central Labour College which Dennis Hird had founded in London in opposition to Ruskin College, which was regarded as too moderate, provided the propaganda with the necessary centre. Among the intelligentsia syndicalism gained as many converts as among the manual workers. Young men of letters, attracted to Socialism by its promise of emancipation but repelled by its bureaucracy and pedantry, thought they had found in syndicalism a way out of the impasse. They read Georges Sorel, the theorist who by adapting Bergson's philosophy gave revolutionary syndicalism a metaphysical foundation. They claimed for the workers and for themselves the right to be liberated without being civilized and made bourgeois. In their interpretation revolutionary syndicalism expressed, in opposition to democratic nationalism, a revolt of the *élan vital*, the obscure forces of instinct.[2]

In 1910 the situation favoured their propaganda.[3] The strike movement, which had been fostered by the action of the Liberals in 1906 and the passing of the Trade Disputes Bill, had been checked by the crisis of 1908. It was in 1910 that it first seriously alarmed the wealthy classes. Important strikes broke out in the coalfields of northern England and Wales, among the cotton spinners of Lancashire and Cheshire, and in the Clyde dockyards.

[1] Tom Mann, *From Single Tax to Syndicalism*, 1913. Charles Watney and James A. Little, *Industrial Warfare*, 1912, pp. 30–34. There is very little in Ben Tillett's *Memories and Reflections*, 1931.

[2] Stephen Reynolds, *A Poor Man's House*, 1909. *Seems So! A Working-Class View of Politics*, also his correspondence published by Harold Wright, 1923. Fabian Ware, *The Worker and the Country*, 1912.

[3] For the Labour agitation in England on the eve of the Great War see in the first place the official documents and the figures published (particularly for the great strikes of 1911 and 1912) in: *Strikes and Lock-Outs. Board of Trade* (*Department of Labour Statistics*) *Report on—and on Conciliation and Arbitration Boards in the United Kingdom in 1910 with comparative Statistics*, 1912, pp. 21 sqq.—*in 1912 with comparative Statistics*, 1913, pp. xxi, sqq. See also the excellent contemporary work by Charles Watney and James A. Little, *Industrial Warfare. The Aims and Claims of Capital and Labour*, 1912, Lord Askwith, *Industrial Problems and Disputes*, 1920, pp. 148 sqq. (The personal reminiscences of a man who at this time was the chief arbitrator at the Board of Trade.) See also G. D. H. Cole, *A Short History of the British Working-Class Movement, 1789–1929*, vol. iii, *1900–1927*, Chaps. v and vi, pp. 63 sqq., also Sidney and Beatice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism* (revised edition extended to 1920) 1920, Chaps. ix and x *passim*. W. H. Cook, *The General Strike. A Study of Labour's Tragic Weapon in Theory and Practice*, 1931, says very little about the agitation in England at the date with which we are concerned.

The number of strikers was the highest registered since 1893. And it was remarked that 30 per cent of the strikers had downed tools to protest against the use of non-union labour—in other words, to defend the supremacy of the unions.[1] But it was also noteworthy that in many instances the strike broke out spontaneously without orders from headquarters, sometimes even against the wish of the union officials. It was therefore a revolt not only against the authority of capital but against the discipline of trade unionism. And the abuse made by the miners on strike in South Wales of the right of picketing conferred by the Act of 1906 caused general consternation. The strike became a lawless revolt when on the evening of November 8 the strikers looted the village of Tonypandy.[2] Should we also mention an incident which took place in London two months later? At Stepney two Russian anarchists suspected of having committed political murders were besieged in the house where they lived. The troops were called out, there was shooting and cannon fire, and the Home Secretary, Churchill, came in person to take charge of the operations until finally both anarchists perished in the burning building. In fact, this dramatic scene was not English. It was an incident of the Russian revolution enacted on British soil. But the *Industrial Syndicalist*, Tom Mann's monthly organ, made use of it for his propaganda. He offered a prize of two guineas for an essay of 3,000 words on the following problem. 'If two men can keep 2,000 men employed and hold them at bay in one street, how many men would be required to defeat two or three million men, spread over the area of Great Britain?'[3]

4

What bodies of workmen would Ben Tillett and Tom Mann on their arrival from Australia select as the field of this propaganda? As we might have expected, Ben Tillett, a former dock labourer,

[1] *Strikes and Lock-Outs. Board of Trade (Labour Department) Report on*, 1911, pp. 2–3. Letter from G. R. Askwith. The number of workers directly involved in strikes had been 56,380 in 1904, 67,653 in 1905. It rose in 1906 to 157,872, fell to 100,728 in 1907, rose again to 223,909 in 1908, and fell to 170,258 in 1909. The movement of rapid increase began in 1910 with a total of 385,085 (p. 14). If we add to the number directly involved in the strike, those obliged to cease work on account of the strike of other workers, we obtain a total of more than half a million.

[2] 'An orgy of naked anarchy' (*The Times*, November 9, 1910). For these disorders see General the Rt. Hon. Sir Nevil Macready, *Annals of an Active Life*, vol. i, pp. 136 sqq.

[3] *The Industrial Syndicalist*, vol. i, No. 6.

and leader of the great strike at the London docks in 1889, turned his attention first to the dockers. In 1889 they had won a great victory and had considerably improved their conditions of labour. Since then however they had lost ground. There were always three times as many men wanting work as those in employment, and the dockers were moreover divided among thirteen rival organizations and hampered by the competition of a host of yellow and black workers, the scum of Asia and Africa. Ben Tillett set himself to revive the old Dock, Wharf, Riverside, and General Workers' Union, the child of the strike of 1889.[1] A strike which broke out at Newport in Wales drew public attention for the first time to the dockers' grievances. The arbitration of the Board of Trade was accepted by the officials of the union but the men refused to accept the award. It was propitious soil for the syndicalist propaganda, a rising of the workers against their leaders' moderate policy. Another organization in the ports provided a field of operations for the other leader of syndicalism after the French pattern, Tom Mann. In collaboration with the Secretary of the Seamen's Union, J. Havelock Wilson,[2] he went from port to port to gather recruits for this still youthful organization. Their programme, drawn up in July 1910 was to form a National Conciliation Board which should fix a uniform standard of wages, the minimum wage to be £4 10s. a month and reform the methods of recruiting labour—in short, draw up an entire code of corporate labour. In spite of pressure from the Board of Trade the Shipbuilders' Federation refused to negotiate with the Union's representatives. War was declared.

The struggle quickly assumed international proportions. For in France among the seamen from Marseilles to Dunkirk, strikes were endemic, and citizeness Sorgue, an unwearied agitator, acted as a link between the workers of both countries. At a congress held in Copenhagen in August, the International Federation of Transport Workers, in spite of some opposition from the German dele-

[1] Ben Tillett, *Dock, Wharf and General Workers' Union. Commemorating the 1889 Dockers' Strike*, September 1910. *Sub finem*: 'Our Union is stronger, richer and more useful now than ever, and its future is with you, brothers and comrades, in a great battle that must only end with the workers being masters of their destinies and that of their respective countries. We must not rest until the cause of poverty is removed, and the abolition of the capitalist system is complete.'

[2] Joseph Havelock Wilson's autobiography, *My Stormy Voyage through Life*. Vol. i, 1925 relates only the first part of his career, and volume ii has not been published. Moreover the book was written by Wilson when in his old age he had become a professed patriot and conservative.

gates, decided in favour of an international strike of seamen. It was to be a general strike not only of the sailors in the mercantile marine but of all who played any part whatever in handling merchandise at the ports. Tillett and Mann won their crowning victory when in November a National Transport Workers' Federation was formed in England comprising thirty-six unions, unions of seamen, dockers, and carters of every description.[1]

The signal for the international strike of seamen was given on June 14, 1911. On the Continent it went unheeded but in England nothing short of a revolutionary outbreak followed. Here we meet again those labour disorders with which we have become acquainted already as intervening so strangely in the Agadir crisis. They took everybody by surprise, 'It is a revolution,' an employer told a high official at the Board of Trade, 'the men have new leaders, unknown before; and we don't know how to deal with them.' And a Labour member told the same official that he could not understand what was happening. 'Every one seems to have lost their heads.'[2] The strike was marked by a violence to which England was unaccustomed and which terrified the middle classes. At Hull, Manchester, and Cardiff there were cases of arson and looting and riots between the crowd and the police in which a large number were wounded. Finally, about the first of August a settlement seemed to have been reached, though the employers found themselves obliged to treat not only with the transport workers but with several other unions. The strikers' official programme was a 'national' programme including the regulation of the conditions of labour throughout the whole of the United Kingdom. But the issue was soon narrowed down to the question of wages and everywhere the employers were striving to save what they could. Everywhere the men obtained an increase of wages equal or almost equal to what they had asked, and often secured in addition the recognition of their union.

But the struggle broke out again almost at once. The port of

[1] The International Socialist Congress held at Stuttgart in 1907 had spent much time debating a motion put forward by Gustave Hervé calling upon the citizens of every country to reply to a declaration of war from whatever quarter it might come by a military strike and an insurrection. At the next congress held at Copenhagen between August 28 and September 3, 1910, Keir Hardie, in Hervé's absence advocated the general strike in a more restricted form characteristic of the tendencies prevalent at the moment in the British unions, a general strike in all industries which provided the implements of war; arms, munitions, and transport.

[2] Lord Askwith, *Industrial Problems and Disputes*, 1920, p. 149.

London had escaped the troubles of June and July since the authorities had made haste to negotiate with the dockers and a settlement had been reached on July 27. But the settlement itself created a new grievance. The wages of the dockers in the port of London had been raised to the level of the wages received by dockers in the employment of certain private companies. The latter then demanded an increase of wages, and this in turn led the dockers who had accepted the agreement of July 27 to demand a corresponding increase in their wages. Ben Tillett formed a strike committee. A strike actually broke out which in the end affected 77,000 men.[1] The conflagration had been rekindled. It was aggravated when another organization intervened.

5

In spite of its title the Federation did not contain all the transport workers in the widest sense of the term transport. The four unions of railway servants remained outside it. But among railwaymen a discontent prevailed which the settlement of 1907, far from allaying, had intensified, and which made them the natural allies of the dockers and seamen. They complained of the composition of the conciliation boards, from which the secretaries of the unions were excluded. They were dissatisfied with the poor results secured by the new method, an increase of wages insufficient to cover the rise in the cost of living and rendered worthless by a host of devices to which the companies had recourse and against which they were powerless to defend themselves. They also complained that the procedure of the conciliation boards was slow, complicated and expensive, and became ruinous when no settlement was reached and arbitration became necessary. In 1910 the General Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants calculated that the operation of the agreement of 1907 had cost the Society £25,000 in three years, to which must be added the cost of the Osborne case.

Moreover, as the result of the Osborne decision the railwaymen turned towards advisers who opposed political action. Richard

[1] For the strike in the port of London see Ben Tillett, *History of the London Transport Strike*, 1911 (with a preface by H. Quelch). It is however a confused and not very informative account. See further the works quoted above, p. 453 *n.*

Bell, responsible for the agreement of 1907, had been replaced as General Secretary of the Society by a man of more pugnacious temper, J. E. Williams, who was provided with an 'assistant secretary' destined to become famous and like Williams a Welshman, the supple J. H. Thomas. But what could they do? The conditions of labour had been fixed for six years: until 1914 the unions' hands were tied. Their officers could not fight unless they were pushed into war by a revolt of their troops. This revolt had begun in July 1910 when, in consequence of the dismissal of a platelayer at Newcastle which they considered unjustified, 3,000 railwaymen had gone on strike dislocating for three days all the communications of that important industrial centre. The companies had won. But the unrest had continued. Here, as among the seamen, the French example was contagious. In October a general strike on the French railways had created a sensation. The French Government had broken it by militarizing the railway service and mobilizing all the railwaymen. If a general strike broke out on the British railways, the Government could not employ this weapon.

At the beginning of August 1911 a general strike seemed very near. In many places serious local strikes occurred, in which the railwaymen revolted against the Conciliation Board and attempted to obtain by direct action an increase of wages and a reduction of hours. A thousand men went on strike at Liverpool. The dockers' strike which had ended ten days before broke out once more in sympathy with the railwaymen. The employers launched a counter-offensive and declared a lock-out of the entire union comprising 48,000 workers. In Liverpool Mann, like Tillett in London, took charge of operations.

The situation became serious. In England's two greatest ports the population was threatened with famine or at least was at the mercy of two proletarian dictators, Ben Tillett and Tom Mann. In the wealthy quarters the price of meat doubled. To supply children and the hospital patients with milk the vans which delivered it were obliged to obtain passes signed by Tillett or Mann. Alternatively a military convoy must be obtained. It was freely granted to anyone who asked for it. Churchill, a former soldier who had gone over to pacifism, became once more a militarist when, as Home Secretary, he lent his services to the Admiralty at a moment of diplomatic tension to organize in the ports a hunt for German spies and borrowed troops from the War Office to

patrol the streets of London and Liverpool. This military intervention was not always successful. If in London the dispute was peaceably settled by an agreement concluded on August 11, it was not the same at Liverpool where the presence of the Irish element no doubt gave the strike a particularly violent character. One day the offices of the Shipping Federation were burnt down. Another day the soldiers used their rifles and there were casualties. They were to be sure local disturbances. But by the indignation they aroused throughout the working class they provoked or came within an ace of provoking another social crisis of a more formidable character.

On August 15 at Liverpool, the day after the affray with the troops, the secretaries of the four railwaymen's unions acting in concert, after protesting against the massacre declared that in conformity with 'the almost universal demand' of the workers they gave the Companies twenty-four hours in which to open negotiations for a new settlement of the questions outstanding between themselves and their employees. Otherwise there would be a general strike. On the 16th the Prime Minister summoned to London the four signatories of the manifesto. On the 17th he had an interview with the Companies' official representative, as a result of which the latter considered themselves entitled to inform the Press that in reliance upon the assurances of protection they had received from the Government they were prepared to guarantee an efficient though reduced service even in the event of a general strike. Asquith then had an interview with the secretaries of the four unions in which he offered to appoint a royal commission to examine the men's grievances impartially and accompanied his offer by a threat as to the consequences of a refusal.[1] To this the men replied by giving the order for a strike which was immediately obeyed everywhere. On Friday morning, August 18, the dislocation of the railway services began.

6

Asquith was in favour of firm resistance. And Churchill was despatching troops in all directions without even waiting for the local authorities to ask for them. It was at this juncture that

[1] On this point see the resolutions of the President of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants in the *Nottingham Guardian* for August 28.

Lloyd George who had already spoken in conciliatory terms in the House of Commons[1] wrested from his colleagues authority to open negotiations. He informed the representatives of the companies and the railwaymen in confidence of the danger of war and urged the bad effect which in the existing situation would be produced by a general strike. The same evening a compromise was reached.[2] The men agreed that the dispute should be referred to a Commission. But on the other hand the Companies undertook to reinstate all the strikers in the positions they held before the strike, and promised that, before the question was referred to the Commission, the directors should meet the secretaries of the unions, which might well seem a first step towards recognizing the latter. Lloyd George indeed evidently encouraged the secretaries to believe that the recognition was only a question of weeks. If the railwaymen's complaints of the Conciliation Boards were justified the Commission could not fail to recommend a system of collective agreements concluded directly with the unions, and the Companies would be obliged to accept on the decision of an impartial umpire what they had refused in August to the pressure of the unions.[3]

The Labour Crisis of 1911 was reaching its end. Disorders in-

[1] H. of C., August 16, 1911. Lloyd George denied the promises alleged to have been made to the Companies by the Prime Minister in a document read to the House by the Labour member Wardle: 'It is a very misleading thing to put down. I object to it very much in the interest of the railway companies, the men, and the community, because it is so important that the Government's position of strict impartiality should be preserved.' (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1911, 5th Series, vol. xxix, pp. 2045 sqq.). H. of C., August 17, 1911. Lloyd George did not want the relegation of the dispute to a Commission to be regarded as the Government's device to evade responsibility. 'The Government of course cannot abrogate its responsibility and cannot accept the report of any Commission without investigation. The responsibility, of course, must be, in the first instance, the responsibility of the Government and then finally of the House of Commons. . . . I hope it will be possible, at any rate during the next few hours, to conduct negotiations without any exasperating intervention, either inside or outside the House.' (*Parl. Deb.*, Commons 1911, 5th Ser., vol. xxix, pp. 2196, 2198.) See the equally conciliatory words spoken by Ramsay MacDonald (*Parl. Deb.*, Commons 1911, 5th Ser., vol. xxix, pp. 2193 sqq.).

[2] *Railway Workers—United Kingdom. Terms of Settlement 19th August, 1911.* (*Strikes and Lock-Outs. Board of Trade* [*Labour Department*] *Report on*, 1911, pp. 168 sqq.).

[3] For the railway strike see, besides the various works mentioned above p. 453 *n.* J. Keir Hardie, *Killing no Murder! The Government and the Railway Strike. What Caused the recent Railway Strike? Who Settled it? For what Purposes were the Troops Called out?* (no date)—the interesting evidence given by J. H. Thomas before the Industrial Council November 27, 1912 (*Inquiry into Industrial Agreements, Minutes of Evidence*, pp. 428–9) Rowland Kenney, *Men and Rails*, 1913. G. W. Alcock, *Fifty Years of Railway Trade Unionism*, 1925 pp. 424 sqq. Charlotte Leubuscher, *Der Arbeitskampf der Englischen Eisenbahner im Jahre*, 1911. *Mit einem einleitentenden Überblick über der allgemeine Entwicklungstendenz in der beutigen englischen Arbeiterbewegung*, 1913 (in the *Staats und Sozialwischen schaftliche Forschungen* by G. Schmoller and Max Sering. Heft, 174). An excellent history prefaced by a general picture of the British labour movement about this date.

deed continued in Wales, where a fight took place between the troops and railwaymen on Friday the 19th which cost seven victims, and Jewish shops were looted in the village of Tredegar. But order was soon restored. The Railway Commission reported on October 18. The report disappointed the railwaymen. It recommended, it is true, that the procedure of the Conciliation Boards should be expedited in the first place by abolishing the right of appeal, but the competence of each board was to be strictly confined to disputes which concerned a particular section of the men, so that it would be impossible to submit claims involving the entire staff. It suggested that their jurisdiction instead of being confined to wage disputes should be extended to all questions concerning the conditions of labour but that questions of discipline should remain outside their competence. It recommended that the secretaries of the unions should sit on the boards, but it did not recommend that the recognition of the unions, the fundamental demand of the railwaymen since 1907, should be granted. The union officials spoke of recommencing the strike. It was in vain. The men's spirit had been broken. One of the four unions, the engineers' and firemen's, stood aloof and the three others thought it prudent instead of ordering a strike to take a referendum on the question. To this the Companies replied by an adroit move cleverly calculated to conciliate the body of the workers. In agreement with the Government which authorized them in turn to raise their rates they decided to grant a general increase of wages.[1] The referendum went in favour of striking but the

[1] In fulfilment of a promise given in August (Railway Workers)—United Kingdom Terms of Settlement 19th August 1911 (*Strikes and Lock-Outs Board of Trade* [*Department of Labour Statistics*] *Report on*, 1912, p. 169). The promise was kept by an Act not passed until the opening of 1913: 2 & 3 Geo. V., Cap. 29: An Act to amend Section One of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1894 with respect to increases or rates or charges made for the purpose of meeting a rise in the cost of working a railway due to improved labour conditions (*Railway and Land Traffic Act*, 1913). In 1907 as compensation for the concessions made to the railwaymen the Government had authorized the companies to pursue freely their policy of amalgamation. The men had protested. For since the effect of this policy would be to diminish the staff required it would involve many dismissals. The protests were obviously unjustified. Can any corporation be forced in the interest of its employees to employ more men than it needs? And, in fact, when the demand for labour was so great were many men thrown out of work as a result of this policy? In 1911 the Government empowered the railway companies to raise their rates to compensate for an increase in wages. The port of London authorities did the same after the August strike. It amounted to making society as a whole instead of a group of capitalists, pay for the concessions made by the latter to their employees; from the Socialist standpoint an extremely questionable solution. The Labour members protested and as their cause was that of the entire public making use of the railways they carried an amendment restricting the operation of the Act to five years. But the House of Lords rejected it and the Commons yielded. See

men had obviously voted only for form's sake. When it was held, the Companies had already decided in obedience to a final command by the House of Commons[1] to meet the union secretaries in conference. A few slight modifications of the Commission's proposals sufficed to satisfy the latter.[2] The men did not strike but accepted the agreement.

7

The railway question was thus settled for the time. But the Labour unrest continued. In December there was a strike of dockers and carters at Dundee, and at the end of the same month a strike of the weavers in north-east Lancashire. In January a general strike broke out at Glasgow. Then in March after the general strikes of transport workers, and the abortive general strike on the railways there followed a general strike in the mines. It had almost broken out in 1909 and though a settlement was reached at the eleventh hour the hostility felt by the miners towards the alterations in the time-table which had followed the introduction of the eight-hours' day persisted. The syndicalist propaganda therefore found favourable soil in the mining districts, particularly in South Wales, where Dennis Hird's Central Labour College organized a course of Socialist lectures; two young miners, Stanton and Vernon Hartshorn, without breaking with the Labour party kept in touch with the revolutionaries, and at the beginning of 1912 the most sensational of the purely syndicalist manifestoes which had appeared in England was published under the title 'The Miners' Next Step'. The issue upon which the conflict centred was the new question of what were known as 'abnormal places'. Was it just that the miner who was paid by the piece should receive less when the lesser output of his labour was due not to the smaller amount of work done, but to the greater difficulty of extracting the coal? The dispute began in a district of the Welsh coalfield, where 10,000 miners remained on

the debates H. of C., January 30, February 11, 12, 1913. H. of L., February 19, 1913 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1912, 5th Series, vol. xlvii, pp. 1571 sqq., vol. xlix, pp. 756 sqq., 1333 sqq. Lords 1912–13, 5th Ser., vol. xiii, pp. 1448 sqq.).

[1] H. of C., November 22, 1911 (*Parl. Deb.*, Commons 1911, vol. xxxi, pp. 1209 sqq.)

[2] Railway Conference Agreement, December 11, 1911. (*Strikes and Lock-Outs. Board of Trade* [*Labour Department*] *Report on*, pp. 169 sqq.).

strike from September 1910 to September 1911 to be defeated in the end. But at the very moment when they surrendered, the British National Federation of Miners decided to take up the question and demand on behalf of the entire federation special wages for men working in 'abnormal places'. They had attempted to discuss the matter with the Mining Association which contained all the mine owners in the kingdom. Such a recognition of national bargaining would however have been a step towards the unification perhaps the eventual nationalization of the mines. The owners therefore proposed regional negotiations and the miners accepted their demands, but proceeded to raise the issue of the minimum wage. The question of abnormal places would be settled by implication if it were agreed that throughout Great Britain, however unproductive the seam, the miners' wage should not fall below a certain minimum. In this way the suggestion for the equalization of wages throughout the country was again brought forward. If the mine owners refused the miners' terms there would be a strike. And a strike we may observe in breach of contract. For the Welsh miners were bound by contract for more than two years, the Scottish for more than one. The union officials though themselves in favour of moderate courses were swept away by the wave of syndicalism.[1]

Throughout the greater part of the country the mine owners accepted the miners' terms, but in Scotland, South Wales, Northumberland, and Durham they refused, and on January 18 the miners by 445,800 to 115,300 votes decided in favour of striking. The solidarity of the workers was now such that half of them who had no direct interest at stake came to the help of the other half. Moreover, a new set of demands was now put forward by the Miners' Federation. It demanded, under pain of a strike, a general tariff of wages drawn up for each district, no wage to be less than five shillings for adults, two shillings for children.

The Government intervened. Four Cabinet Ministers—the Prime Minister, Sir Edward Grey, Lloyd George, and Sydney Buxton—met the representatives both of the mine owners and the miners. Asquith submitted his proposals to both parties. The principle of a minimum wage was recognized. In each district special agreements would be necessary to fix that minimum which

[1] For the miners' strike see in addition to the works mentioned above p. 453 *n.* Maurice Alfassa, *La Grève noire et l'Evolution des Syndicats*, 1913.

would differ in different districts. In each district a joint conference might be set up on which the Government would be represented, and if it failed to reach an agreement, the representatives of the Government would act as umpire. As in November, the mine owners were divided, though the miners were already asking more than in November, not only the acceptance of the abstract principle of a minimum wage but that it should be legally fixed. The men unanimously rejected Asquith's proposals. The strike began, affecting directly a million men, indirectly a further million—the railwaymen, for instance, and the iron workers. It lasted a month and in contrast to the labour troubles of 1911 was conducted peaceably. Not a single sanguinary incident occurred. Tom Mann was imprisoned for inciting the soldiers to make common cause with the workers against the Government; but there was no collision between the troops and the strikers. The calm however was itself formidable. Finally, to escape the *impasse*, the Government carried a Bill establishing a minimum wage in the mines. It provided that it should be fixed under conditions prescribed in detail and varying with each class of worker, by twenty-three joint district boards with independent chairmen. Introduced on the 19th of March it was passed on the 29th. The Conservative Opposition refrained from embarrassing the Government by obstruction and allowed the Bill to pass, merely expressing the hope that once it had become law the Government would show itself sufficiently firm to make the working class accept it.

For this was the critical issue. The new Act embodied the proposals made by Asquith in February, not the claims of the miners: it contained no clause fixing a national minimum wage. What would be the attitude of the union officials now the Act had been passed? They evaded the difficulty by taking another referendum of the union, and though a majority voted in favour of continuing the strike it was so small that the officials overruled the decision on the ground that two-thirds of the miners had not voted for the strike. And soon they decided to raise a pæan of victory. It was surely an event of historic importance that so soon after the excitement aroused by the dispute between the two Houses, Parliament, instead of discussing such political questions as Home Rule or Welsh Disestablishment had devoted its time for two entire months to the Labour question. And if the miners

had not obtained everything they had asked for, they had obtained for the first time in the history of labour legislation recognition of the principle of the minimum wage, not as in 1909 for certain classes of workers incapable of self defence, but for the most powerful union in the United Kingdom and in consequence of its victorious action. 'The solidarity of the workers', Vernon Hartshorn declared on March 28, 'has become so firm that in less than a week, by the stoppage of the railways and other means of transport, we can paralyse the nation, bring the government to its knees and make it beg us to resume work on harder conditions than those that it would have declared inacceptable at the outset.'

8

This labour unrest, which at times verged on anarchy, was embarrassing to the Government and the more so since it no longer possessed the hold over the working class it once exercised through the channel of those Members of Parliament who claimed to be their accredited representatives. We can picture the great demagogue of the Cabinet, Lloyd George, struggling with difficult problems of parliamentary tactics. After the important series of measures, from the Trade Disputes Act of 1906 to the National Insurance Act of 1911, whose only result seemed to have been to increase the discontent of the industrial proletariat, what further step could he take in the same direction? Must he content himself with using his diplomatic ability to intervene in the labour disputes which were following in rapid succession? We have seen the brilliant success with which in August 1911 he had taken the Prime Minister's place and prevented the railway crisis from issuing in disaster. In March 1912, a witness depicts him, while arbitrating in company with three of his colleagues on the coalminers' strike, 'keeping conspicuously quiet and possibly keeping himself in reserve for a crisis'.[1] He must find some new slogan, turn the attention of the public to some other question and place himself once more in the limelight. And the need became the more pressing the more enemies he made in the course of his stormy career. Once already he had been libelled by a journalist; but he had prosecuted the libeller, who had made an abject apology

[1] Lord Askwith, *Industrial Problems and Disputes*, 1920, p. 210.

and he had emerged victorious. It was very different when at the end of 1912 after attacking so many people he found himself the object of attack, defamed by a group of bitter foes.

They did not belong to the syndicalist group. Nevertheless, they were fighting as free-lances on what may be termed the right wing of the movement. The two Chesterton brothers and Hilaire Belloc had constructed a philosophical and social system which they defended by a lavish supply of paradoxes. The philosophical foundation was Catholic. The two Chestertons were or would soon be Catholics, Belloc was a born Catholic, and they emphasized the negative aspects of their Catholicism, an equally fanatical hatred of Protestantism and the Jews. In their eyes Protestantism and Jewry stood for the bourgeois spirit, the spirit of big business, and it was in their criticism of bourgeois civilization that they joined hands with the syndicalists. Belloc had provided the latter with useful formulas by his denunciations of the 'Servile System', the 'Selfridge System' in which he enveloped in a common condemnation Capitalist and Collectivist industrialism. What difference did it make to the individual whether he was the slave of a private employer of a democratic state; earned his wage as the employee of a large company or of the Government?[1] Belloc and his friends wanted to return to the old system of small property, home industries, and trade guilds and they could justify their Catholic sympathies by the fact that it was in Catholic Europe, Ireland, and the South and West of the Continent that large-scale industry had made least progress. They published a new weekly, *The New Witness*, which aggravated the prevalent intellectual chaos. Belloc attacked Lord Murray, who administered the Liberal party funds, two Jewish members of the Cabinet, and Lloyd George himself.

The great inventor, Marconi, had founded a company in England to exploit his inventions and had offered to conclude an agreement with the British Government for the sole right to set up official wireless stations throughout the Empire. The Government was in a hurry to conclude the agreement at a time when like all the other European Governments it was making prepara-

[1] Hilaire Belloc, *The Servile State*, 1912, with its device: 'If we do not restore the Institution of Property we cannot escape the Institution of Slavery; there is no third course.' See also G. K. Chesterton's fantastic Utopia inspired by the same spirit, *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, 1909 and for the controversy with orthodox collectivism, *Socialism and the Servile State. A Debate between Messrs. Hilaire Belloc and Ramsay MacDonald, M.P.*, 1911.

tions for a war possibly imminent. It was accused of being too hasty and there was talk of corruption. The men just mentioned were accused, the two Jews being Sir Rufus Isaacs, the Attorney-General, who was brother of Godfrey Isaacs, Chairman of the British Marconi Company, and Herbert Samuel, the Postmaster-General, who in the eyes of his detractors was guilty of the double offence of signing the agreement and being a Jew. We shall not enter into the details of the Marconi affair which dragged out for several months. It is enough to say that it provoked debates in the House, and was submitted to a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry and that, if as the result of the investigation Samuel was proved completely innocent, the others were proved to have been guilty, if not of corruption in the strict sense, at least of incorrect financial dealings.[1] The affair, once politically settled, hung fire. A new agreement was made with the Marconi Company more favourable to the State than the former had been. The campaign against Lloyd George and his friends had not therefore been fruitless. After this the country was obviously of the opinion that it was in bad taste to continue to attack them. The London Press refused to imitate methods of political warfare only too fashionable, as Lloyd George himself observed 'on the other side of the Channel'.[2] When a few months later Sir Rufus Isaacs was promoted to one of the highest judicial positions in the kingdom the public does not seem to have protested. Nevertheless, Lloyd George smarted from the attacks made upon him. For we cannot deny that his detractors had laid a brutal finger on a sore place in the system of democratic government. Men of the humblest origin rise to political power on a programme of war against the rule of wealth and, if they become ministers, receive as such a salary which enables them to take their place in a society based on the inequality of wealth which they denounce. But if ever they

[1] See the debates H. of C., October 11, 1912; appointment of a Committee of Inquiry (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1912, 5th Series, vol. xlii, pp. 667 sqq.); June 18–19, 1913, Cave's motion of censure on the three politicians incriminated (ibid., 1913, 5th Ser., vol. liv, pp. 391 sqq., 542 sqq.). Cf. Asquith, *Memories and Reflections*, vol. i, pp. 207, 212. For a good account of the Marconi affair see the article entitled 'Ministers and the Stock Exchange', in the number of the *Round Table* for June 1913 (vol. iii, pp. 425 sqq.). The case of Lord Murray of Elibank was the object of a special inquiry by the House of Lords (H. of L., March 9, 1914, *Parl. Deb.*, Lords 1914, 5th Ser., vol. xv, pp. 412 sqq.). Without hypocrisy the Unionist opposition could scarcely have pushed the matter to extremes against Lloyd George. In 1900 Rufus Isaacs had defended Arthur Chamberlain when he was accused during the Boer War of similar offences in connection with army supplies.

[2] Speech at the National Liberal Club, July 1, 1913.

should cease to be ministers how will they maintain their position? This is the trap laid for a statesman of plebeian origin by a society democratic in form, but plutocratic in fact. And this moral weakness of popular leaders who have become wealthy afforded a welcome argument to the syndicalists, eager as they were to proclaim the bankruptcy of politics.

9

What revenge could the Welsh country solicitor, convicted of having become in his turn a capitalist, and moreover of having made use of his political position for that purpose, take upon those plutocrats who so often wounded by his denunciations, had at last found an opportunity to make their enemy suffer? At the close of 1911 when the railway crisis was approaching its end an 'Industrial Council' composed half of representatives of the employers and half of representatives of the unions had been formed by the Government to arbitrate in labour disputes and try to devise some regular method of effecting their peaceful settlement. It was invited in June 1912 to hold an inquiry on the latter question and reported a year later.[1] Lloyd George had promised to give effect to its recommendations[2] but he let the matter drop. The danger of the great strikes had for the moment been averted and the idea was not calculated to arouse popular enthusiasm. He would seem rather to have thought of raising the question of nationalizing the railways and it was probably at his request that a Royal Commission was appointed to examine the question.[3] But without waiting for its report and deciding whether it might be good policy to place the question in the forefront of the Government's programme, he launched a campaign against the monopoly of the great landlords. He had indeed made preparations for an attack, heralded by certain clauses in the Budget of 1909, before

[1] *The Industrial Council. Report of Inquiry into Industrial Agreements 1913* and *Minutes of Evidence taken before the Industrial Council in connection with their Inquiry into Industrial Agreements 1913.* (The answers of a hundred witnesses afford an excellent picture of the relations between employers and men in England on the eve of the war.)

[2] H. of C., July 23, 1912 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1912, 5th Series, vol. xli., pp. 1116–17).

[3] *A Royal Commission to inquire into the relationship between the railway companies of Great Britain and the State in respect of matters other than safety of working and conditions of employment and to report what changes, if any, are desirable in that relationship.* (Appointed October 1913 with Lord Loreburn as chairman.)

the Marconi scandal broke out. And he never desisted from it throughout his long career. On this point at least a statesman, so often charged with tergiverzation, showed a persistence carried almost to the point of obstinacy.

He began, as Chamberlain began his campaign for tariff reform, by forming a Committee, the Land Inquiry Committee, to collect for the use of himself and his supporters all the necessary information about the situation of British agriculture. On the other hand, after lengthy discussions which occupied the greater part of 1913 he obtained the support of the Cabinet as Chamberlain had failed to do ten years earlier when he tried to commit the official Unionist party to his protectionist campaign, and he unfolded his agrarian programme in two important speeches delivered, the first at Bedford on October 11, the second at Swindon on October 22—the day on which the first volume of the Land Inquiry Committee's report was published. What were its recommendations? To understand it we must go back a quarter of a century and seek in the experiments made in Ireland by both the great historic parties the origin of the two programmes of agrarian reform which confronted each other in 1913. The first possible method of assisting the small farmers was to allow tenants to purchase their farms with financial aid from the State and become owners themselves. The Unionists had employed it in Ireland, tentatively at first (Lord Ashbourne's Acts) then on a large scale by the Land Law of 1903, which sought to parcel out the entire arable area of the country into small independent holdings. But even before the Unionists tackled the question in Ireland, the Liberals, when Gladstone was Prime Minister, had tried a different method, not making the tenants smallholders, but regulating by law their relations with their landlords, fixing the amount of rent payable and protecting them against unjustifiable evictions. The method had been extended almost immediately to the small tenants of the Scottish Highlands who were called crofters and whose condition closely resembled that of the Irish cottiers. The Liberal party had been faithful to this second method when in 1911 it repaired its defeat of 1907 and passed a Scottish Land Act, which extended the provisions of the Crofters' Act to all the small farmers of Scotland. And at present while the Unionists to stem the depopulation of the country districts advocated an agrarian policy which would settle on the land the largest possible

number of small freeholders,[1] the Liberals, affected by the increasing influence of Socialism, rejected this programme of peasant individualism. If the land was to be purchased it must be for the benefit of the entire community. Lloyd George proposed to give the farmer the same legal protection that the new social legislation had given the worker in the towns, and as he proposed to give it to the agricultural labourer by fixing a legal wage. The execution and development of the new legislation would be the task of a Ministry of Land which Lloyd George proposed to create and which besides a host of other functions would take over the work of the Board of Agriculture. This new department would complete the revision of the land survey ordered by the Budget of 1909 and of which two-thirds had already been accomplished, acquire uncultivated land, plant trees, drain it and fit it for cultivation, and regulate the relations between the landlord and the farmer, between the farmer and the agricultural labourer and even more generally the relations between landlord and tenant in the town as well as in the country. For all the land in the United Kingdom urban as well as rural would be under the jurisdiction of this important department intended by Lloyd George to regenerate Britain by methods which had nothing in common with those of Socialist industrialism, by reviving and repopulating the countryside.[2]

Was this campaign likely to succeed? As we know, the world war prevented its development. We can therefore only guess the answer. But the prospects of success would not seem to have been hopeful. In the first place, conditions were less favourable than ten years earlier. The farmers' economic position had greatly improved in the interval. The prices of foodstuffs had risen, in the first place for the same reason that prices in general had risen—the increase in the amount of gold in circulation—and secondly because of the decline in the American supply since the United

[1] For the agrarian policy of the Unionist party see Lord Lansdowne, speech at the Westminster Palace Hotel, July 24, 1912; speech at Matlock Bath, July 21, 1913—and the propaganda pamphlet entitled: *A Unionist Agricultural Policy, by a Group of Unionists*, 1913.

[2] *The Land. The Report of the Land Inquiry Committee*, vol. i Rural, 1913; vol. ii Urban, 1914. For the question of rural estates see further the two speeches delivered by Lloyd George at Bedford on October 11 and at Swindon on October 22, 1913 (the second outlines his complete programme); for urban estates see his reply at the Treasury on October 30 to a deputation of urban tenants and his speech at the Holloway Empire on November 29 and for the application of his programme to Scotland his speech at Glasgow on February 4, 1914.

States had begun to absorb its agricultural produce.[1] In the second place, if Lloyd George wanted to ally the farmer and the farm labourer he had a difficult problem to solve. He must find some means of identifying their interests. But the first thing which struck the farmer in Lloyd George's scheme was the legal guarantee of a higher wage for his hands, and this was sufficient to throw him into the arms of the landlord. In the third place, Lloyd George might indeed win the support of a large section of the public—both of the working and the middle class—by denouncing the abuses of the landlords' monopoly in the great cities: he had already brought the subject into prominence when he introduced his Budget of 1909. But the problems of urban and rural landed property were so different that it was not easy to combine their solution in a single scheme of reform. And finally, what was his aim? Was it in truth to repopulate the countryside by bringing the town labourers back to the land? A Utopia. As well attempt to turn back the course of a river.[2] The utmost that could be hoped was to check the depopulation of the countryside. To succeed, Lloyd George must win the agricultural labourers. But this dull and ignorant class, incapable of organizing except by fits and starts,[3] could not be relied upon to save itself or even to assist

[1] The yearly average price of wheat which had fallen to about 26 shillings a quarter during the period 1899–1901 then rose, not again to fall below 30 shillings during the years which followed 1907. It was above 43s. in July 1909, above 38s. in July 1912 (*Commerce and Industry. Tables and Statistics for the British Empire from 1815* edited by William Page, p. 217). For the fluctuations in the price of wheat see William Sutherland, *Rural Regeneration in England. A Short Discussion of Some of the Outstanding Features of the Rural Land Question and of the Principal Proposals for Reform*, 1913, pp. 13–16.

[2] 'Attached to both the old-established political parties there is an army of open-air speakers and other so-called "workers". . . . It fell to my lot at that time' (about 1914) 'to supervise the work of a group of them in London. . . . It appeared that the smallholdings, the growth of cabbages and potatoes, and Wat Tyler's Rebellion, figured prominently in their harangues. They were quite pained when I pointed out to them in the frankest possible terms that the electors of industrial London were not likely to become enthusiastic supporters of any political party that had nothing more serviceable to offer.' (Christopher Addison, *Politics from Within*, vol. i, pp. 31–2.)

[3] See the remarks by the American, Price Collier (*England and the English*, 1909, Pop. Ed. 1911, p. 289), on the dullness which he finds incredible of the British rustic: 'This appeals to the stranger, the American stranger at least, because he knows no such types among those of his own race at home. When he meets with stupidity and political disability, it is among the lower classes of foreigners, but here are families who have lived side by side perhaps for centuries, the one in the squire's house, the other in the labourer's cottage, yet the difference between them mentally and politically is as great as was the difference between the southern planter and the hands in his cotton fields. . . . The Englishman of this type is uneducated, inarticulate, inaudible and grotesquely awkward, both mentally and physically. But he has his small political value, for he is always and unalterably for no change!' With this quotation we may compare a description whose agreement with the former is the more striking because it comes from a very different source. It is an English Socialist who writes: 'The English labourer is the worst used and the least bold

actively those who tried to save it. Let us even suppose the impossible, that they joined their voices to the powerful chorus of discontent heard from the urban proletariat. The outcry of a class, scattered and constantly diminishing in numbers, would scarcely be audible above the syndicalist uproar. For it was here that the real problem lay and we must resume the history and define the character of the syndicalist revolt as it developed after a series of Labour triumphs had brought to an end the great campaign of strikes among the seamen, transport workers, railwaymen, and miners which had lasted almost a year from June 1911 to May 1912.

10

Two social crises, two episodes of the class war, two great strikes obviously syndicalist and revolutionary filled the papers for a considerable time. Neither indeed took place in Great Britain. But it was a remarkable fact that both broke out in parts of the British Empire where everyone believed racial animosity to be too intense to leave room for class hatred;[1] and yet even there the class war raged. In South Africa there arose in opposition to a South African party in whose ranks the most prominent of the Boer leaders in the late war fraternized with their conquerors, a new 'Labour party' which mustered the workers without distinction of race—English, Russian Jews, poor Boers from the country absorbed by the Rand proletariat—against the capitalist tyranny. But if the whole truth is to be told, the movement was inspired by stronger racial passions than it was willing to admit.

peasant in Europe. . . . It is futile to assert that the French peasant on his own land is poorer and works harder than the English agricultural labourer. Though the French peasant may be in the hands of moneylenders and though the English smallholder may be robbed by market salesmen and railway companies, each possesses a dignity, a glimpse of freedom unvisioned by the agricultural labourer.' (F. E. Green, *The Tyranny of the Countryside*, 1913, p. 253.)

[1] Tom Mann, *Memoirs*, 1915, p. 321: 'Early in 1914 . . . I was sent to South Africa to endeavour to weld the working classes together, and was enthusiastically received by the miners, the railwaymen, and others. To my pleasurable surprise the foremost contingent in a procession of 10,000 people who met me at Johannesburg Station, was a couple of hundred young Dutchmen, with their trade union banner. This was a great advance on anything I had seen when in the same district in 1910. At that date, very few of the Dutch Afrikanders were working in the mines, and those few would have no truck with the Britishers. In the interval between my two visits, economic pressure and fraternization had brought the young Dutchmen into the industrial field, and they had learned the necessity for industrial reorganization.

The South African labour agitation was no clearer as to its character and aims than the agitation in England five or six years before against the employment of Chinese labour in the Rand mines. The workers of the South African Labour party were protesting against the competition of native labour, and the party's real name should have been not the Labour but the White Labour party. Nevertheless this did not alter the fact that two parties faced each other, in each of which representatives of the two white races, the English and Boer, worked side by side, and the strength of the new Labour movement was suddenly revealed in the summer of 1913 when a mining company attempted to increase the hours of work and its employees replied by a strike which quickly became a general strike of all the miners. There were enough Russian Jews on the Rand to spread in this favourable environment the current doctrines of European revolution. And the disturbance assumed such serious proportions that troops had to be sent to Johannesburg. On July 4 shooting took place, nineteen persons were killed, and a hundred wounded. In reply, the offices of an important paper and the railway station were sacked, and the central electric power station seized by the rioters so that when night fell disorder reigned in a city totally deprived of light.[1] A truce followed but in the following January the civil war broke out anew. The South African railways were owned by the State. The Government attempted to reduce the staff of railwaymen, and the latter declared a general strike. The Government took vigorous action, arrested the leaders before they had time to concert measures with the Federation of Trade Unions, and when the Federation declared a general strike of all the unions, took the necessary steps to break it. But the situation remained uncertain. Not only did the new Labour party win a majority of seats on the Transvaal Provincial Council, but at the same time a Boer stalwart named Hertzog, uniting Nationalist propaganda with the Socialist propaganda of the Labour party, accused the two leaders of the South African party, Botha and Smuts, of betraying their race and selling themselves to British capitalism. Nine South African trade unionists deported by Smuts without trial received an enthusiastic welcome in London and no less enthusiastic was the

[1] For the Rand Strike see the excellent accounts in the *Round Table*, September 1913, No. 12, vol. iii, pp. 750 sqq.; December 1913, vol. iv, No. 13, pp. 170 sqq.

welcome Tom Mann received from the South African workers when he returned in June.[1]

At England's very door Ireland presented the same spectacle. It was at Belfast in 1907 that there occurred for the first time one of those great revolutionary strikes of which England would be the theatre a few years later. A strike of a limited number of men was followed by a sympathetic strike of other workers. The employers replied by a lock-out which threw still more men out of work and this in turn was followed by a general strike of all the workers of the city. For an entire month the work of the port was at a complete standstill; 10,000 soldiers policed Belfast, men were killed and wounded. These disturbances made practically no impression in England. Disorder was chronic in Ireland. Moreover, the movement failed. The Catholic and Protestant workers were divided too deeply to remain long united in a common programme of Socialist action.[2] But the Belfast disturbances produced a man who during the next few years would be the great leader of Irish trade unionism. James Larkin, known to the Irish crowds, more familiarly as 'Jim', the local secretary of the dockers' union, was a fanatic of irreproachable morals[3] who fascinated the strikers of Belfast by his eloquence and strange appearance. He wore long black hair, a heavy drooping moustache, a large, broad-brimmed black hat, and a kind of black toga. After the conclusion of the Belfast strike he broke with the British dockers' union and founded an Irish Transport Workers' Union. At the same time he entered into relations with the thinker who provided him with a creed—James Connolly, who in 1896 had attempted to found an Irish Socialist Republican party had since gone to America, where, as we have already said, he learned the doctrines of syndicalism from the Industrial Workers of the World. Settling

[1] The South African Strike (*Round Table*, March 1914, No. 14, vol. iv, pp. 231 sqq.). An interesting measure in the history of strike legislation is an Act passed in 1912 by the South African Parliament (*Railway and Harbours Service Act*, 1912) which provided that railway servants who went on strike should be liable not only to dismissal with loss of their right to promotion, but also to penalties not exceeding a fine of £50 and six months' imprisonment. But even in 1914 no attempt was made to enforce it.

[2] For the Belfast Strike see Lord Askwith, *Industrial Problems and Disputes*, pp. 115 sqq. See also the evidence, very incoherent however, given by J. Larkin before the Industrial Council (*Inquiry into Industrial Agreements*) July 30, 1912, *Minutes of Evidence*, pp. 243 sqq.

[3] He was, it is true, at the beginning of his career as a trade unionist sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for misappropriation of funds. But the witness who made this statement in 1916 before the *Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland* (*Report 1916*, Q. 1657) adds that he was released by Lord Aberdeen at the end of the three months and that 'from that moment dates the influence exercised by Larkin upon Irish administration'.

in Dublin, Larkin and Connolly worked together to bring into the Transport Workers' Union all the men, particularly the unskilled labourers, who were unwilling or unable to join the existing unions, and thus to found in Ireland the one big union by whose instrumentality in the United States the Industrial Workers of the World hoped one day to achieve their revolution. They published their paper, the *Irish Worker*, a weekly which soon possessed a circulation of 15,000. Their headquarters was Liberty Hall, from which they issued their marching orders. Their plan of campaign, intended to gain immediate successes, and at the same time to impress public opinion and make recruits, was to launch a succession of sudden strikes, every time forcing the employers to yield the more speedily as they were taken the more completely by surprise.

On August 25, 1913, Larkin having brought the fury of the bourgeoisie to a climax by provoking a strike of the Dublin tramways was arrested with four other leaders on a charge of 'criminal conspiracy'. He was indeed immediately released with a caution, but his arrest nevertheless gave rise to riots brutally repressed by the police and troops (one person was killed) in the course of which he was again arrested. Then the Dublin employers decided to meet the attack by a counter-attack. While professing their respect for the legitimate forms of trade unionism they refused to keep in their employment any member of the Irish Transport Workers' Union since its aims were revolutionary and its methods made regular work in Dublin impossible. To the amazement of the British public at a juncture when the question of Home Rule had reached a crisis Unionists and Nationalists combined against Larkin's agitation. The leader of the Opposition was Murphy, a wealthy capitalist, chairman of a tramway company, and director of an important Nationalist organ, the *Irish Independent*. Both in Ireland and in South Africa Socialism seemed to be outstripping Nationalism.

The struggle lasted four months, months of pauperisation and disorder.[1] Larkin was sentenced to seven months' imprisonment, on the charge not of conspiracy for which the penalty was more severe but simply of seditious language, then liberated for fear of

[1] For the Dublin Strike see G. D. H. Cole, *A Short History of the British Working Class Movement 1789–1927*, pp. 103 sqq.; 'Larkinism, The New Force in Ireland' (*New Statesman*, September 13, 1913, p. 711); and T. M. Kettle 'The Agony of Dublin' (*Irish Review*, November 1913. Vol. iii, pp. 441 sqq.).

an insurrection of the working class, not only in Ireland but perhaps in Great Britain as well. For Larkin, monarch of the Dublin proletariat, crossed St. George's Channel and entering into relations with the English syndicalists attempted to rouse the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress from its slumbers and bring about the declaration of a general strike in England in aid of the Irish general strike or, if that were impossible, at least a refusal by the British transport workers and railwaymen to handle goods coming from Ireland. With what success? He was warmly applauded at a number of public meetings, and his influence provoked sporadic outbreaks of striking in several ports on the west coast of England. But he failed to persuade the Congress to issue the orders he desired and the Irish strike, after all attempts at arbitration had failed, came to an end at the beginning of January. There was good reason to think that four months conflict had done more to spread the syndicalist creed than the final defeat to discredit it.

II

All these manifestations which occupied public attention were not, it must be recognized, in the true sense English. In the Rand the general strike was the work of a cosmopolitan proletariat, a seed plot for the ideas and passions of the Continental Revolution. In Dublin, Irish disorder gave the movement a distinctive colour. And in Great Britain two years before, where had the most violent disturbances occurred? In Celtic Wales and in Liverpool where there was a host of Irish workers. We must therefore be clear as to the nature of the obstacles which strictly English society, even when affected by this uprising of labour, opposed to its threat of anarchy.

We have already seen how many strikes from 1910 onwards were anarchist in the sense that they were revolts of the working masses instigated by unofficial agitators against agreements previously concluded between the employers and the union officials. To read the lamentations of the middle class one might believe that the structure of 'social peace' based on reciprocal concessions freely accepted, hitherto the boast of British society, was a thing of the past. In reality nothing could be more untrue. If the number

of strikes in breach of contract was increasing, the number of collective contracts was increasing even more rapidly. And these anarchist breaches of contract were often due to the fact that the original contract had been badly drawn, couched in ambiguous terms, or did not cover all the members of the union. Sir George Askwith, the official arbitrator at the Board of Trade, made it his business to see that each of these disputes resulted in the conclusion of a more satisfactory contract and therefore strengthened the operation in England of the system of collective bargaining and conciliation boards at the very time when it was widely believed to be in jeopardy.[1] And in this respect the policy of the Board of Trade would seem to have been successful. Such at any rate was the conclusion reached by the extensive inquiry conducted by the Industrial Council of which we have spoken above.[2] According to an official report, at the end of 1911 293 Conciliation Boards had been set up under the Conciliation Act of 1896. A year later there were 297 and at the end of 1913 325.[3] On these figures, discouraging from his point of view, a young syndicalist commented bitterly: 'There is a good deal', he wrote, 'to be said for the view that we have too much conciliation, and that a big increase in the number of strikes would do us no harm.'[4]

Moreover, the syndicalist doctrine was opposed to the regulation of industry by the State. State interference with the unions was acceptable only if confined to a unilateral guarantee of advantages to the working class. There was no objection to the Acts establishing an eight-hour day and a minimum wage in the mining industry, and the latter was the direct result of an agitation conducted by the unions. But what had syndicalism to say of the National Insurance Act which compelled the workers to contribute? At that very time a French law dealing with old age pensions and based like the British on the model of Bismarck's legislation was defeated by the obstinate resistance of both classes directly affected—the employers and the workmen—assisted by the hostility of the judges. Would not the same thing happen in England and must not the Government expect very strong oppo-

[1] Lord Askwith, *Industrial Problems and Disputes*, p. 129.
[2] *The Industrial Council, Report on Inquiry into Industrial Agreements*, 1913, p. 4.
[3] *Conciliation (Trade Disputes) Act, 1896. Ninth Report by the Board of Trade of proceedings under the Conciliation (Trade Disputes) Act, 1896*, 1912, p. 11. *Tenth Report*, 1913, p. 13. *Eleventh Report*, 1914, p. 10.
[4] G. D. H. Cole, *The World of Labour*, 1913, p. 316.

sition to a measure which if duly put into operation would take fourpence a week from the pockets of 14,000,000 wage earners and sums varying from £1,000 to £10,000 from the pockets of employers? It had the pleasant surprise of finding the opposition less than it had anticipated. Why? No doubt it was partly due to the zeal and skill displayed by the talented officials Lloyd George had selected to help him in applying the Statute, but chiefly to the almost universal docility shown by all classes of the population. There were indeed some attempts at 'passive resistance' by small employers, but the example of scrupulous obedience given by the heads of the great firms was soon followed. The principle of workmen's contributions was naturally unpopular with the masses, and their ill humour on this account explains, at least in part, several defeats of Liberal candidates at by-elections after 1912. But though the Labour party and the Trades Union Congress protested against contribution by the workers neither advised them to disobey the law and employees everywhere, if they did it with a grumble, paid their weekly contribution.

The payment of contributions began on July 15, 1912. By October 15,250,000 wage earners were paying their contributions,[1] a proof that the law was being fully carried out. On January 15, 1913, the day arrived when drugs and medical treatment were given for the first time to those entitled to them by the Act. This involved the active co-operation of the doctors, and the medical profession, which constituted a species of bourgeois trade union, was in revolt against the National Insurance Act. But Lloyd George had made concessions which satisfied the majority of doctors, particularly country districts and in January 1913 the British Medical Association, while continuing to protest in principle against a measure 'which touched upon the honour of the profession and was harmful to the public interest', declined to strike against it. Meanwhile the system of insurance against unemployment was working with the utmost smoothness. Since

[1] Lloyd George's speech at the Hotel Cecil, October 12, 1912. In 1913, 3,600,000 persons received sickness benefit; 44,000 the special treatment provided by the Act for tuberculosis. The total cost of benefit per week was £283,600—that is to say, for the entire year 1913, £14,224,500. (*National Insurance Benefit, Return to an Order of the Honourable the House of Commons dated 1 July, 1914; for Return showing approximately: a. The Number of Insured Persons who received each week 1, Medical Benefit, 2, Sickness Benefit, 3, Maternity Benefit. b. The Average Weekly Cost of such Benefit. c. The Aggregate Cost of each Benefit per Person, ending 11th day of January 1914 and d. The Number of insured Persons who have received one or more of these Benefits in the period ending the 11th day of January, 1914*).

the boom continued more money was being collected than spent: when the next slump arrived, and it was scarcely to be expected for the next two or three years, there would be an ample reserve with which to face it.[1] We may add that by providing for the treatment of consumptives and setting up new institutions called schools for mothers, State aid increased every year with the most beneficial effects on public health.[2] But beneficial or not these undertakings were so many triumphs of State action.

Would these victories of State intervention check the growth of the friendly societies and trade unions? On the contrary. The State invited both to help in administering the Insurance Act. The passing and enforcement of the Act fostered both. The friendly societies, so powerful already, increased their membership. And it was the same with the trade unions. At the end of 1910 the membership of the unions in the United Kingdom was a little less than 2,500,000, at the end of 1911 it was a little above 3,000,000, an increase which was no doubt due to the syndicalist propaganda. But in 1913 the number of members almost attained 4,000,000 and in this case it is not easy to say how far the increase was due to the progress of revolutionary syndicalism, how far to the desire of a large number of workers to share in administering the National Insurance Act through a union. We are driven to the paradoxical conclusion that during those very years in which revolutionary syndicalism was so vocal, co-operation between the trade unions and the Government became closer than before.

12

A little book had been published in 1906 entitled *The Restoration of the Gild System* whose author, Arthur J. Penty, does not appear to have been influenced by Continental syndicalism. Indeed the term syndicalism is absent from his book. He was a

[1] *Unemployment Insurance. First Report on the proceedings of the Board of Trade under Part II of the National Insurance Act, 1911, with Appendices, 1913* (by W. H. Beveridge).

[2] For these new developments see Christopher Addison, *Politics from Within, 1911–18*, 1924, vol. i, p. 29. Two Statutes were passed amending the National Insurance Act of 1911. 1, 3 & 4 Geo. V, Cap. 37: An Act to amend Parts I and III of the National Insurance Act, 1911 (*National Insurance Act 1913*). 2, 4 & 5 Geo. V, Cap. 57: An Act to amend Part II of the National Insurance Act (*National Insurance Act* [*Part II Amendment*] *Act, 1914*). But neither the first of these which increased the sickness benefit nor the second which modified in certain details the machinery of the unemployment insurance represented any change of principle.

disciple of Ruskin and William Morris. The enemy whose misdeeds he denounces is 'collectivism', by which he means more particularly that administrative socialism of which the Webbs were the protagonists. According to him the evil which afflicts modern society is not competition, which would be an excellent thing if it meant a rivalry in putting goods of better quality on the market, but commercialism whose object is to increase the producers' profit by putting on the market as large a number as possible of manufactured articles and thus supplying the largest possible number of consumers at a cheap price. To save the community, therefore, we must devise an industrial system which would substitute the control of the artisan for the control of the financier and a social structure in which the producers' point of view prevails over the consumers'. It would be in some respects a return to the system of the mediæval guilds. It was a conservative Socialism, of restoration rather than revolution, but it agreed with syndicalism in its hostility to all political action and the supremacy of the bureaucratic State. When therefore about 1910 syndicalism was imported from France and began to make disciples the *New Age*, a pioneer weekly which defended the ideas of Penty and his group, perceived at once the advantage to be derived from the new labour creed. In its columns a new form of Socialism took shape called 'Guild Socialism'. The complicated plan was worked out of a society in which capitalism and profit would be eliminated but not by transforming all producers into wage slaves of the democratic State. They would be free servants of the guilds, independent corporations represented by a single co-operative assembly which would allot work and settle disputes. The democratic State, however, also had its place, performing all the non-economic functions of society, political, military, and judicial and also, according to some Guild Socialists, guaranteeing the consumers as such against exploitation by a combination of producers.[1] The derivation of these ideas has been sought in the teaching of the German jurist Gierke, presented to the British public by Maitland the great historian of law.[2] Gierke refused to

[1] G. D. H. Cole, *The World of Labour. A Discussion of the Present and Future of Trade Unionism, 1913.* A. R. Orage, *National Guilds. An Inquiry into the Wage System and the Way out,* 1914.

[2] *Political Theories of the Middle Ages* by Dr. Otto Gierke Professor of Law in the University of Berlin. Translated with an Introduction by Frederic William Maitland, LL.D., D.C.L. Darwin Professor of the Laws of England in the University of Cambridge, 1900.

attribute to the State an absolute sovereignty which made the rights of subordinate associations depend upon its sufferance. According to him society was composed not of individuals but of associations which were not obliged to justify their existence to an omnipotent and jealous state. The State was simply one association amongst others whose functions must be prescribed and limited in relation to the latter. But there is no need to look to Germany for the origin of a point of view so essentially English. The Roman conception of sovereignty has never been popular in England. Did not this Guild Socialism simply restate in another form the liberal and anti-authoritarian doctrine of the division of powers which for two centuries the English had become accustomed to regard as the most essential feature of their political constitution?[1] And did it not express in the form of a modified syndicalism that old spirit of self-government, of voluntary discipline, of which the English had once been so proud and which was still strong enough to counterbalance alike the excesses of popular anarchy and the abuses of governmental authority?

13

Nevertheless, the British middle class did not recover from the alarm inspired by the labour troubles. Besides the events in South Africa and in Ireland and their repercussion in England other incidents attracted the attention of the Press. Another strike of the London dockers broke out in the summer of 1912 though it was a rash and ill-advised attempt which enabled the employers to avenge their defeat of the previous summer.[2] In the autumn a lightning strike of 6,000 railwaymen broke out on one of the main lines in sympathy with a comrade's dismissal for drunkenness off duty. The Conservative Press called it the strike for the right to get drunk.[3] And finally there was the general lock-out

[1] Cf. Arthur J. Penty, *The Restoration of the Gild System*, pp. 70–1: 'As to the form which the government of the future will take, it is not improbable that the division of function between the Upper and the Lower Chambers will continue, with this difference that whereas the Lower Chamber would be elected by the people in their private capacity, the members of the Upper Chamber would be nominated by the Gilds . . . the principle of authority on a popular basis would be thereby established, while a balance of power between the various interests in the State would be automatically maintained.'

[2] For a good account of this strike and its failure see Charles Watney and James A. Little, *Industrial Warfare and the Aims and Claims of Capital and Labour*, 1912, pp. 89 sqq.

[3] G. D. H. Cole, *A Short History of the British Working-Class Movement 1789–1927*, vol. iii, pp. 92–3. G. W. Alcock, *Fifty Years of Railway Trade Unionism*, p. 459.

in the building trade proclaimed by the contractors in January 1914 to put an end to a succession of minor irresponsible strikes and transformed in June into a national lock-out, which was still in progress on August 1st. There were indeed no disputes comparable in gravity to those which had marked the summer of 1911 and the following winter. But the figures for 1913 showed a greater number of strikes than ever before and a larger number of men affected than at any time before 1911[1]: and a still more disquieting feature was the reorganization of the unions which was being achieved in the background. England was not perhaps on the brink of a revolution as understood on the Continent. British labour did not revolt against patriotism in the name of class loyalty nor did it seek to abolish the state or even capitalism. But in the pursuit of more restricted objectives—recognition of the unions, increase of wages, reduction of hours it was making preparations by the employment of a new strategy to involve England in a class war on a scale in excess of anything previously witnessed.

Imagine—to make our ideas clearer we will take a concrete instance—that on a railway the platelayers, the engine drivers, the firemen, the guards, the porters, the men employed in the clerical departments, and every other branch of the company's service possess separate unions and that one of these separate unions finding itself unable to obtain its demands by friendly negotiation decide to strike. Not only will the men employed in other branches be unwilling to join it, it may even be impossible for them to do so because they are bound by agreements made with the company which have not yet expired. Therefore, instead of leaving the workers to form as many minor unions as they please—each confined to a special branch—and therefore unable to undertake more than futile skirmishes, in every industry all these unions must be amalgamated into a single union covering the entire industry and in a position to fight pitched battles with the employers. This was the strategy advocated in France by the *Confédération Générale du Travail*. In England it appealed to many young trade unionists and was perhaps the most attractive feature of the French movement. These men did not call themselves 'revolutionary syndicalists' but simply syndicalists, adopting the

[1] 1,497 strikes; 516,037 workers directly affected; 688,925 workers directly or indirectly affected. (*Strikes and Lock-Outs. Board of Trade* [*Department of Labour Statistics*] *Report on* p. x.)

French name without its adjective, or Industrial Unionists in opposition to the Craft Unionists, since they advocated unions embracing an entire industry not some special branch like the unions of the old style.[1]

There were legal obstacles to the amalgamation of several unions in a single body, for it was necessary to secure the consent of two-thirds of their members.[2] Many unions therefore unable to amalgamate were content with the looser bond of federation which, while preserving the financial independence of the unions entering the federation, united them in a common front defensive or offensive against the employers. We have already seen how the foundation of the Federation of Transport Workers by Tom Mann in 1910 marked a turning-point in the history of trade unionism and paved the way for the syndicalist offensive of 1911. The Federation of British Miners, founded in 1888, did not embrace all the miners, since it did not include Durham, Northumberland, Cumberland, Wales or the South of England. Nevertheless, it possessed a numerical strength, a prestige and an organization which enabled it to conduct the general strike of 1912 on behalf of the entire body of miners. But trade unionism was not content with federation. It aimed at the constitution of large militant unions by amalgamating many small unions. In 1911 and again in 1912 the Trades Union Congress declared in favour of this policy of amalgamation. Already in May 1912 forty-seven unions with a total membership of 403,000 workers were attempting to reduce their number to five by amalgamation.[3] In the case of the railwaymen this aim was achieved, or almost achieved, when in January 1913 J. H. Thomas succeeded in uniting in a single union, the National Union of Railwaymen, three out of the four unions of railway servants, the engine drivers alone refusing to join it.

[1] G. D. H. Cole and W. Mellor, *The Greater Unionism. With special Reference to Mining, Building, Engineering and Shipbuilding, Transport and General Labour and to the position of the General Federation of Trade Unions*, 1913.

[2] 39 & 40 Vict., Cap. 22: An Act to amend the Trade Union Act, 1871 (*Trade Union Act, Amendment Act*) *1876*, Sec. 12.

[3] Ironmoulders and Ironfounders: six unions with 30,000 members. Tailors and Garment Workers: thirteen unions with 30,000 members. Iron and Steel Workers: eight unions with 53,000 members. Building Trades: seventeen unions with 180,000 members. Railway Workers: four unions with 110,000 members. (*The Times*, May 14, 1912.) In this as in every other sphere Germany provided a model. In Germany, where trade unionism was strongly organized, there were only a hundred unions as against more than 1,000 in England.

The French unions were not content with advocating the amalgamation of all the workers in a particular industry into one militant force. They wanted to make all these federations in turn corps of a single army commanded by a single general staff. The *Conféderation Générale du Travail* was the entire body of workers preparing a general strike not in particular industries but in all at the same time for the final and complete overthrow of capitalism. And, as we have seen, the American syndicalists dreamt of one big union mobilizing all the workers without exception for revolutionary action. In Dublin, Connolly and Larkin imitated this strategy. In England the trade unions were too solidly organized for even the most visionary of revolutionaries to contemplate for a moment such a Utopia. But might it not be possible to make use, if not of the Trades Union Congress, at least of the General Federation of Trade Unions whose very name resembled that of the French *Conféderation* by transforming it into a species of executive body with authority to draw up lists of claims and if the employers refused them to declare strikes? Certain syndicalists entertained the idea.[1] But if the Federation had flourished for the last year or two it was as an 'approved society' for the administration of the National Insurance Act. And if it attracted to its ranks many unskilled labourers who had not hitherto shown any desire to enter the unions affiliated to the Congress, the attraction was not the hope of imminent revolution but its double function of collecting contributions and distributing sickness benefit. But at this point a project struck root in the minds of certain active Labour leaders, typically British in character though suggested by the formulas of French syndicalism, and destined soon to draw widespread attention.

In November 1911 when the railwaymen, dissatisfied with the report of the Commission of Inquiry, were speaking of reopening

[1] Tom Mann 'Prepare for Action' (*The Industrial Syndicalist*, vol. i, No. 1, July 1910, p. 18). G. D. H. Cole and W. Mellor, *The Greater Unionism 1913*, p. 18: 'The close touch now existing between the Unions of General Labour and the General Federation of Trade Unions is a hopeful sign and points the way to the realization of this central control. All the Unions must come into the General Federation, the T.U.C. must become its mouthpiece and the Parliamentary Committee must become a committee of the General Federation.' Cf. Articles by the same writers 'The Sympathetic Strike. Labour's New Weapon and the Way to use it' (*Daily Herald*, May 5, 1914). 'The Real Solidarity of Labour' (*Daily Herald*, June 23, 1914).

the strike, the miners suggested to them a species of alliance, an agreement to strike in concert and achieve their respective aims at the same time. So long as the dispute continued, negotiations were carried on.[1] But the railwaymen did not strike after all, and the miners fought alone. Two years later in October 1913 the miners at their annual congress at Scarborough did not get beyond vague suggestions of a general strike, but in December when a 'special congress' of the trade unions met to discuss the help to be given to the Dublin strikers, the miners' leader, Smillie, proposed on behalf of his union a formal alliance of the miners, railwaymen, and transport workers for common action. These three bodies—the miners, railwaymen, and transport workers had been the three militant bodies in 1911 and 1912. Though they did not constitute a majority of the British proletariat, they were nevertheless a most formidable host. They numbered more than 2,000,000 workers, of whom 1,300,000 were union members. And since their work was of such a nature that if in obedience to the word of command they declared war on the employers, the whole of industry would be deprived of coal, and the entire country of food. As a weapon of intimidation a strike of these three bodies would be equivalent to a general strike.

The suggestion was taken up instantly. The reasons for its success are plain. In the first place it enabled the masses to imitate the action taken in South Africa and above all in Ireland. And at the same time it satisfied the desire of certain leaders, more moderate in the sense that they were more methodical, to guide the agitation of the extremists into a practicable channel. The infection of the Dublin strike had produced a number of sporadic strikes, costly and barren. Could not these be prevented by putting before the stalwarts the hope of a struggle on a grander scale and more decisive?[2] Moreover, some of the railwaymen's leaders,

[1] M. Alfassa. *La Grève noire et l'évolution des syndicats en Angleterre*, p. 25.

[2] To understand the views which prevailed among the officials of the Triple Alliance see J. Havelock Wilson's reply to a revolutionary manifesto issued by J. Larkin, November 22, 1913: 'Over two years the Sailors' and Firemen's Union—i.e., the Dublin branch—has been subject absolutely to the control of James Larkin. We have been involved continuously in disputes without any reference to or consultation of the governing body of our union, and I have personally entered many protests against the way in which the business has been conducted'; also J. H. Thomas' speech to a meeting of railwaymen on November 23: 'Because of what the British trade union movement had done, and was prepared to do, in defence of the basic principle of combination, it was not to be assumed that the leaders in England were to be stampeded into a certain course of action. . . . While they insisted on the companies observing agreements, the men must observe the same code of honour' (*The Times*, November 24, 1913).

J. H. Thomas among them, even more prudent than the former, merely hoped that when the existing agreement expired it would be renewed on terms more acceptable to the workers if they hung over the directors' heads the threat of a general strike of the three bodies. However that may be, sixty-one delegates representing 300,000 railwaymen, 800,000 miners, and 250,000 transport workers met in London and appointed a Sub-Committee to draw up a scheme. It was submitted on June 4 to the governing bodies of the three groups for their examination. It proposed to set up a common Advisory Council for the three bodies with authority to formulate their demands so that if they were not accepted three strikes would be declared simultaneously. All agreements as to wages and conditions of labour were to be for short periods and to terminate on the same date so as to make a simultaneous strike possible. And in face of hostile action by the employers or Parliament the three bodies should be ready to take concerted measures. This did not amount to a regular constitution in the strict sense of the term—it was merely a draft scheme for discussion by the three organizations. But the fact remained that the Triple Industrial Alliance, as it would soon be called, had been founded and that if on December 1 the railwaymen did not obtain from the Companies the concessions for which they were asking, the country was faced with the prospect of a strike of 2,000,000 allied workmen in a position to involve its entire industry in stagnation and chaos. On July 17, 1914, Lloyd George, addressing an audience of city financiers and merchants, admitted the gravity of the threat which hung over the nation. He would have liked to express his confidence that the crisis would be overcome like so many others in the past. If however the insurrection of labour should unhappily coincide with the Irish rebellion which as we shall see every one feared, 'the situation will be the gravest with which any government has had to deal for centuries'.

II THE FEMINIST REVOLT

1

We have given one explanation of the fact that five years after the Liberal victory of 1906 the British franchise had not yet been rendered fully democratic and there seemed little prospect of the

reform in the near future. It was the indifference of the proletariat which did not seek in political action the weapon it required to achieve its purposes. But this was not the only reason. The Liberal Cabinet found other obstacles in its path when it attempted to carry a measure extending the franchise. Granted it had the boldness to introduce universal suffrage was it to be confined to one sex alone? The restriction was already opposed by a sufficient number of Members of Parliament to obstruct any measure which ignored the political claims of women. Some of our readers may be surprised that among the problems which embarrassed the Liberal Government during the years immediately preceding 1914 we attach such importance to the question of female suffrage. They have evidently forgotten the strange agitation carried on twenty years ago by English women to compel their enfranchisement. These women refused to regard as a genuine democracy a form of government which reserved to the male sex the double privilege of electing and being elected to Parliament. Against this masculine tyranny they organized a revolutionary agitation without parallel in any other European country. Therefore, while in the syndicalist movement something of French and Latin anarchism invaded England, there sprang up a distinctive form of anarchy, specifically English. If however this suffragist movement, as it was termed, broke out suddenly at this juncture, the way had been paved by a long campaign for the emancipation of women. We must briefly relate its history and describe its character, since at this point it enters the main stream of British political history.

Why did women demand emancipation? And why in England more than in any other country? The philosophy of historical materialism, as formulated by Marx, suggests an answer plausible at first sight. Capitalism had flung a host of women and children into the new factories of northern England. Its motive was simply the accumulation of wealth. Women were more amenable to discipline and their labour was cheaper. Nevertheless, automatically and unconsciously it was promoting their emancipation. It was breaking down the exclusive and rigid principles of the traditional patriarchalism and enfranchising women, in as much as it took them from the domestic hearth and incorporated them in a wider group, which in the long run would prove less oppressive to its members when the machine had been placed at the service of the workers instead of the capitalists who exploited them.

Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether the industrial revolution and the factory system played the important part in the history of modern feminism which Marx ascribed to them. We must not imagine that these English girls, whom the official reports depict working long hours almost naked, mingled promiscuously with their male fellow workers in the hot and humid atmosphere of the cotton mills or in the darkness of the mines, were therefore at least emancipated from the control of their parents or husbands. To the latter they represented extra wages and only too often were compelled to take the hardest labour off the men's shoulders. When women were forbidden by law to work in mines, whole families of miners emigrated in search of an industry where the labourer could make his wife and children wage earners. When the law was content with limiting women's hours of work the male workers accepted the restriction only as the one lever they could employ to shorten their own hours. In either case the new legislation was possible at a period when the dominant Liberalism was bitterly hostile to any legal regulation of adult labour, only because it was supported by a public opinion which regarded the woman as physically and intellectually man's inferior and entitled for that reason alone to the protection of the law which placed her in the same category as the child, treated her as a minor, and sought to bring her back from the factory to the home.[1] In 1844

[1] H. of C., March 15, 1844, Lord Ashley's speech: 'The females not only perform the labour but occupy the places of men; they are forming various clubs and associations and gradually acquiring all those privileges which are held to be the proper portion of the male sex. . . . What is the ground on which the woman says that she will pay no attention to her duties, nor give the obedience which is owing to her husband? Because on her devolves the labour which ought to fall to his share.' (*Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. lxxiii, p. 1096). It has been pointed out that the proportion of women to men employed in the textile industry before the industrial revolution was the same as after it. Even if this is the case, as a result of the enormously rapid growth of the industry the actual if not the relative number of women employed increased at a rate equally rapid. It has also been pointed out that the opponents of the factory system seriously exaggerated the number of married women employed in the Lancashire mills, that the miners sent only their daughters into the factory, and that in principle women left it on marriage. Possibly, but the mistake figured nevertheless among the arguments, by which the philanthropists persuaded Parliament, and moreover it was not only married women but young girls whom the middle-class Utopians wished to remove from the factories. For the reservations we have just discussed see Ivy Pinchbeck's excellent book, *Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution 1750–1850*, 1930—for British Factory legislation in so far as it affected women see *Women under the Factory Acts*, Part I, *Position of the Employer*. Part II, *Position of the Employed* by Nora Vynne and Helen Blackburn. With the assistance of H. W. Allason, M.A., Solicitor on certain Technical Points of Law 1903. For the effect of the legislation on the number of women employed in industry and the nature of their work see *A Study of the Factors which have operated in the Past and those which are operating now to determine the distribution of Women in Industry. Presented by the Secretary of State for the Home Department by Command of His Majesty. December 1929.* 1930.

Lord Brougham, arguing against the legal regulation of women's work in factories, appealed to the principles of Liberal orthodoxy: 'Cannot a woman make a bargain? Cannot a woman look after her own interests? Is not a woman a being capable of understanding those interests, of saying whether or not she has stamina and strength to work?'[1] Thirty years later these arguments had by no means lost their power to convince British Members of Parliament. During the 'seventies, at first under Gladstone's Liberal Cabinet, then under the Conservative administration of Lord Beaconsfield, the opposition of the orthodox Liberals prevented reinforcement of the legislation protecting the labour of women in factories and mines and its extension to domestic industries, and this successful opposition came from the pioneers of English 'feminism'[2] who objected to a system of legal protection as degrading to their sex.[3] The years passed by; we have reached the threshold of the twentieth century, the old Liberalism is on its deathbed and the feminists have accepted Socialism of a more or

[1] H. of L., May 20, 1844 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. lxxiv, p. 1315).

[2] The term of course had not yet been invented. Indeed it is a curious fact that if the theory is older in England than on the Continent the name is of French origin, in current use since 1895. That year a '*Revue Féministe*' appeared for the first time in Paris (Mme Avril de Sainte-Croix, *Le Féminisme 1907*, p. 137) and a Belgian quarterly already in existence for three years, *La Ligue, Organe belge du Droit des Femmes* devoted a final paragraph in each number to the '*Mouvement Féministe*'. In 1901 the *New English Dictionary* contains indeed the two words 'Feminism' and 'Feminist' (the latter is labelled rare) but with meanings very different from those we attach to them. We have not come across the word in the columns of *The Times* before 1908 (*The Times*, June 3, 1908) and then in connection with the feminist movement in France. As late as May 7, 1910 *The Times* uses the form 'Femininism'.

[3] [Barbara Leigh Smith] *A Brief Summary in plain Language of the most important Laws concerning Women together with a few Observations thereon, 1854*, p. 13: 'Philosophical thinkers have generally come to the conclusion that the tendency of progress is gradually to dispense with law—that is to say, as each individual man becomes unto himself a law, less external restraint is necessary and women, more than any other members of the community, suffer from over legislation.'—*Factory and Workshops Acts' Commission. Report o the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the working of the Factory and Workshops Acts, with a view to their Consolidation and Amendment; together with the Minutes of Evidence Appendix and Index*, vol. i, *Minutes of Evidence*, pp. 337 sqq.: Resolutions passed at a meeting of women: 'That this meeting fully recognizing the hardships endured by many women engaged in laborious and unsuitable occupations is nevertheless of opinion that legislative enactments placing restrictions on their employment, though they in some instances apparently palliate, do not overcome the evils they intend to remedy, but rather tend to perpetuate them and it therefore advocates the entire removal of all existing restrictions.' See Professor Fawcett's speeches in the House of Commons, H. of C., May 6, June 11, June 23, 1874 (*Parl. Deb.*, 3rd Ser., vol. ccxviii, pp. 1801–2; vol. ccxix, pp. 1421 sqq.; vol. ccxx, pp. 314 sqq.). February 21, 1878 (ibid., vol. ccxxxviii, pp. 106 sqq., 115, 124 sqq., 308, 311, 548, 596, 603, 610–11, 612). See also for this opposition of the pioneers of feminism to legislation regulating female labour Ray Strachey *The Cause . . . 1928*, pp. 234–6. Beatrice Potter 'The Lords and the Sweating System' (*Nineteenth Century*, June 1890, vol. xxvii, pp. 899). G. D. H. Cole, *A Short History of the British Working Class Movement 1789–1927*, vol. ii, pp. 126–7.

less Radical description. But 'protests are still raised against any legislation which does not place men and women on a footing of absolute equality, whether it is a question of restricting the labour of women in laundries and dressmaking,[1] or making their employment on the surface work of mines illegal as well as their employment in the mine itself. In 1908 John Burns attempted to carry the latter reform but was defeated by the opposition of women.[2] The history of British Factory Legislation therefore presents an air of paradox. In the middle of the nineteenth century those who were seeking to regulate the conditions of male labour in the factories adopted a circuitous route and proposed the regulation of women's labour alone. Now when the exploitation of women in certain branches of industry presented a spectacle too glaringly scandalous to be tolerated and the law was compelled to intervene, Parliament could protect the women only by protecting at the same time the workers of both sexes, as was exemplified by the Trade Boards Act of 1909.

2

The paradox however is a proof that feminism owed its birth to influences not directly connected with the industrial revolution. The historian of feminism must not depict women driven against their will into the factories by the greed of manufacturers and then emancipated in their employers' despite as a result of the common conditions which the factory system enforced on both sexes. The majority of trade unions contained no women, and where women were members, as in the cotton industry, they neither secured nor demanded access to the executive.[3] There were no feminine trade unions, or if one or two had come into being their existence was artificial and precarious. Advanced ideas of eighteenth century enlightenment, the philosophy of the French revolution, the revival of these ideas and this philosophy

[1] Jessie Boucherett, Helen Blackburn, and some Others, *The Condition of Working Women and the Factory Acts*, 1896, p. 50.

[2] Ibid., p. 53. Annie Kenney, *Memories of a Militant*, pp. 130 sqq.

[3] H. of C., July 12, 1910, Winston Churchill's speech: 'The Amalgamated Association of Card-Room and Blowing-Room Operatives have a membership of 45,000. Of these 35,200 are women and 9,800 men. The association has an executive of 10 members. Not a single woman had been elected at the time I refer to, to serve on the executive' (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1910, 5th Series, vol. xix, p. 222).

in the great individualist and liberal movement which after years of stagnation marked the years around 1860—these are the sources from which was derived the impulse which drove women to claim equality with men in the factory and the office, in the liberal professions and in public life. The origin of the movement was intellectual not economic, bourgeois not proletarian.

The first important legislative victory won by the champions of the emancipation of women was the passing in 1857 of the Matrimonial Causes Act, in the teeth of a bitter opposition from the Church of England of which Gladstone made himself the mouthpiece and thanks to Palmerston's support.[1] According to the law as it existed previously not only was the married woman enslaved to her husband or rather, to use Blackstone's words, 'absorbed, incorporated' into his person, but it was in principle impossible for her to regain her freedom by divorce. The marriage bond could indeed be partially or completely broken in two ways. But neither of these amounted to divorce in the modern sense of the term. Both the partial and the complete rupture were determined by the Canon Law and were pronounced by the ecclesiastical courts. The former was divorce *a mensa et toro* (from bed and board), what we now call separation of person and property—though the separation of property was not as complete as one might have expected. The latter a divorce *a vinculo matrimonii* was a declaration of nullity. The marriage was not dissolved but declared after inquiry 'null and void from the beginning'. For, as Blackstone explains 'the canon law, which the common law follows in this case, deems so highly and with such mysterious reverence of the nuptial tie, that it will not allow it to be unloosed for any cause whatever, that comes after the union is made'.[2] The rule admitted only one exception. It had been devised by husbands of the governing class, galled as they were by the fetters of a matrimonial code which if strictly applied did not permit them to divorce even an unfaithful wife. The British Parliament made use of its sovereignty to override the prohibitions of Canon Law and by a 'private' Bill—that is to say, a measure applicable only

[1] 20 & 21 Vict., Cap. 85: An Act to amend the Law relating to Divorce and Matrimonial Causes in England. To which must be added a Statute passed the following year (1858): 21 & 22 Vict., Cap. 108: An Act to amend the Act of the Twentieth and Twenty-first Victoria, Cap. Eighty-five.

[2] I Comm., 441.

to the individual case—passed in due form by both Houses,[1] declare a particular marriage dissolved and the parties free to remarry. But the procedure was extremely costly. Only the very wealthy could obtain a Divorce Bill.[2] All this was altered by the Act of 1857.

The Act transferred matrimonial causes from the Church Courts to a new civil court composed of the Lord Chancellor, one of the Chief Justices, and an ecclesiastical judge. This court would decide whether it should grant what the old canon law called divorce *a mensa et toro* and which would be called in future a judicial separation or what was now called simply divorce, not a declaration of nullity but the dissolution of the marriage bond for acts committed subsequent to marriage. In the case of the wife adultery would be a sufficient ground. In the case of the husband incest, rape, bigamy with a married woman, an unnatural offence, or adultery accompanied by cruelty or desertion was required. A clause which forbade a wife divorced for adultery to marry her lover was subsequently repealed. A wife who had obtained a judicial separation was placed for the first time in the position of a *feme sole*—that is to say, was given full enjoyment of her civil rights, the right to enter into contracts and bring civil actions, and a deserted wife might under certain circumstances be placed in the same position.

The mere fact that the jurisdiction in 'matrimonial causes' was transferred from an ecclesiastical to a civil court possessed a momentous significance. It meant that marriage had lost that quality of semi-religious 'mystery' of which Blackstone spoke. In future it would be a mere civil contract. Could it then like other civil contracts be dissolved at the pleasure of the contracting parties? Far from it. For in the first place it was only in a small number of cases strictly defined by law that the new judges could after due investigation dissolve the marriage contract and in the second place, the Act of 1857 did not place the two contracting parties on an equal footing; simple adultery which gave the hus-

[1] In reality by the Lords alone. When the Bill was sent down to the House of Commons from the Upper House in which it had been first introduced it was regularly passed without debate.

[2] The husband must take the following steps. 1. He must bring a suit at the Assizes against his wife and her lover for what English law called 'criminal conversation'. 2. If he won his suit he must obtain a decree of separation from an ecclesiastical court. 3. The decree secured, he must obtain from the House of Lords the private Bill which would effectively set him free.

band the right to a divorce did not give it to the wife. The new legislation had, it is true, made divorce less aristocratic, for it had made it cheaper. It no longer cost £200 and often far more to obtain as in the days when a private Bill was required. In future it would not cost more than £60 at most, often £40 or even £30 and legal aid might be given to a poor suitor.[1] But there was only one tribunal competent to grant divorces, and it was fixed in London. How enormously therefore the cost was increased when the suitor lived in a remote district and in addition to the ordinary costs must defray the expense of travel to London, and lodging there, not to speak of the cost of bringing up witnesses! If divorce was no longer the exclusive privilege of the enormously wealthy, it was reserved for the rich and for the inhabitants of London and the home counties.

We might therefore have expected that under the pressure of the same moral forces which had led to the Act of 1857 the legislation concerning divorce would have undergone important modifications during the next half century. In fact, hardly any alteration was made. In 1878 a husband's aggravated assault upon his wife was declared a ground for judicial separation.[2] But this was all. A lavish use of simple separations summarily pronounced by the Justices of the Peace was the expedient by which the unaltered rigour of the divorce law was rendered more tolerable. But it was an expedient which presented serious drawbacks. Countless homes among the poorer classes were legally broken up with no possibility of replacing them by new. A host of illegitimate unions was the inevitable result of a code which made divorce too difficult, particularly for the poor, and separation on the other hand perhaps too easy. Complaints were raised. A society was founded to secure a reform of the divorce law. It demanded and obtained—though not until 1909—the appointment of a Royal Commission of inquiry. The Commission held seventy-one sittings, fifty-six of which were devoted to taking evidence and 246 witnesses were heard. It unanimously reported in favour of making the grounds of divorce the same for the wife as for the husband and a large increase in the grounds of nullity.

[1] *Royal Commission on Divorce and Matrimonial Causes*, February 25, 1910. Mr. Musgrave's evidence. (*Minutes of Evidence*, vol. i, pp. 10 sqq.), also John Galsworthy, *A Commentary*, pp. 243 sqq.

[2] 41 Vict., Cap. 19: An Act to amend the Matrimonial Causes Act. (*Matrimonial Causes Act*, 1878.)

With equal unanimity it recommended that the high court should be empowered to appoint deputies to bring divorce within the reach of the poor in every part of the country, and that restrictions should be placed upon the publicity of proceedings and their publication in the Press. The majority further recommended that the grounds for divorce should be enlarged, and besides adultery should include prolonged desertion, cruelty, madness, habitual drunkenness, and imprisonment for life in commutation of a death sentence.[1] But neither the Government nor Parliament had time to take these proposals into consideration. The British divorce law remained what it was when the twentieth century opened. The movement for the emancipation of women followed other paths.

3

To facilitate the dissolution of the marriage bond was to emancipate the woman in as much as it made it easier for her to escape from a union in which she played the part of prisoner or slave. But could not her freedom also be secured by improving her legal position in marriage itself? To give effect to the principle that the husband and wife are legally a single person and the personality of the woman incorporated into her husband's, English common law almost wholly denied a married woman the right to hold property. Her personal estate became the husband's property by the fact of marriage. And even over her real estate he possessed a large number of rights and he enjoyed an unrestricted right to the income derived from it. If injured by a third party the wife could bring an action only with her husband's consent and in his name as well as her own. In the latter half of the nineteenth century such provisions necessarily seemed anomalous. They had in fact survived so long only because a number of expedients had effected a compromise between the rigour of the law and the demands of real life. The father who shrank from surrendering his daughter's fortune—his own after all—to the caprice of a son-in-law could make in her favour what the English law called a settlement, drawn up according to the rules of 'equity' to

[1] *Royal Commission on Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Report*, November 2, 1912, *Minutes of Evidence*, 3 vols. and *Appendices* 1912.

correct the 'common law'.[1] Nevertheless, since the system had been devised not so much to protect the wife as her patrimony it involved a host of complications which did not make for her pecuniary independence. And even so it was expensive and out of the reach of people of small means. When the latter by the pressure they exercised upon the wealthy classes obtained successive and considerable extensions of the franchise, how could Parliament avoid taking action to give poorer women something analogous to what the jurisprudence of equity had secured for their wealthier sisters?

It was in fact a reform which the champions of the emancipation of women had pressed upon Parliament even before the Matrimonial Causes Act was passed in 1857. The passing of that Act proved at first detrimental to their cause. What reason was there to commiserate the lot of the married woman when, if her case really deserved pity, it had been made easier for her to obtain her freedom? Nevertheless, the anomaly remained flagrant and too obviously out of harmony with the ethics of the period. The consumers' co-operative societies, it was noticed, paid their dividends to married women of the working class as if they were the private property of the latter and the public opinion of the proletariat accepted a practice which had no legal justification. Custom also allowed a married woman to conduct a business as if, in spite of her marriage, she possessed an independent juridical personality. If she became bankrupt were not her creditors defrauded by a law which declared her financially irresponsible unless it could be proved that she had been her husband's 'agent' acting under his orders?[2] A succession of Married Women's Property Acts were passed which within a few years profoundly transformed English law.

An Act passed in 1870,[3] and completed by an Act passed four years later[4] gave a married woman a right of property in any

[1] The courts of equity could even compel the husband if he claimed a property in his wife's name to settle part of it on her, provided the property in question was not worth less than £200. (B. L. Smith, *Brief Summary*, p. 6.)

[2] For the problem to be solved see the interesting debates in both Houses during the session of 1869; H. of C., April 14, July 21, 1869, H. of L., July 30, 1869 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. cxcv, pp. 760 sqq., vol. cxcviii, pp. 402 sqq., 979).

[3] 33 & 34 Vict., Cap. 93: An Act to amend the law relating to the Property of Married Women (*Married Women's Property Act*, 1870).

[4] 37 & 38 Vict., Cap. 50: An Act to amend the Married Women's Property Act, 1870 (*Married Women's Property Act* [1870] *Amendment Act*, 1874). The Scottish law was reformed on similar lines by two Statutes 40 & 41 Vict., Cap. 29: An Act for the Protection

personal gain made since marriage, investments made with the produce of her work, and all bequests. In respect of the property thus declared her separate estate she could take legal action in her own name. The Act of 1882[1] was at once a Statute of consolidation which united in a single measure the two Acts of 1870 and 1874, and a new measure which extended the application of the principles laid down by the Act of 1870. The latter Statute had been in fact that remnant of a far more radical Bill passed by the Commons but mutilated by the Lords. Twelve years later, the House of Lords passed without debate a Statute which enacted that the entire property of a married woman, both that which she possessed at the time of marriage and that which she obtained from any source after marriage, should be as much her property as if it had been settled upon her. Her liberty was restricted on one point alone, and the restriction was in her own interest. Settlements were respected by the new Act and those who made them were entitled to protect a married woman against her own weakness and make it impossible for her to alienate under pressure from her husband the capital settled upon her. This fundamental Statute of 1882 has been completed in more or less important respects by four Statutes, passed respectively in 1884,[2] 1893,[3] 1907[4] and 1908.[5] But by 1882 a legal development may be regarded as in its main features complete which for speed is probably unequalled outside periods of violent revolution. Before 1870 a married woman in England, in the poorer classes at least, was subject to a legal tutelage of almost iron rigour. Twelve years later separate property had become the normal condition of married people and a wife enjoyed a freedom unknown in any other country. In this respect English law amazed, we might almost say, shocked the jurists of the Continent.[6]

of the Property of Married Women in Scotland (*Married Women's Property [Scotland] Act*, 1877) and 44 & 45 Vict., Cap. 21: An Act for the Amendment of the Law regarding Property of Married Women in Scotland (*Married Women's Property [Scotland] Act*, 1881).

[1] 45 & 46 Vict., Cap. 75: An Act to consolidate and amend the Acts relating to the Property of Married Women (*Married Women's Property Act*, 1882).

[2] 47 Vict., Cap. 14: An Act to amend the sixteenth section of the Married Women's Property Act, 1882 (*Married Women's Property Act*, 1884).

[3] 56 & 57 Vict., Cap. 63: An Act to amend the Married Women's Property Act, 1882 (*Married Women's Property Act*, 1893).

[4] 7 Edw. 7, Cap. 18: An Act to amend the Married Women's Property Act, 1882 (*Married Women's Property Act*, 1907).

[5] 8 Edw. 7, Cap. 27: An Act to render Married Women with a separate Estate liable for the support of their Parents (*Married Women's Property Act*, 1908).

[6] For this legislation see Emile Boutmy, *Essai d'une Psychologie politique du Peuple*,

The English matrimonial code underwent further modifications during the half century which preceded the Great War. The wife's refusal to return to her home was no longer regarded as an offence punishable with imprisonment,[1] and the law deprived the husband of his right to confine a wife who refused to live with him.[2] The husband was no longer permitted to deprive his wife by testament of the guardianship of her children.[3] The procedure by which a deserted wife could obtain alimony was made easier.[4] And we may mention in passing the permission at last granted in 1907 to marry a deceased wife's sister.[5] What is extraordinary is the survival to that late date of the old prohibition of canon law and the opposition to the reform organized by the Anglican High Church party under the leadership of Lord Salisbury's two sons, Lord Robert and Lord Hugh Cecil. It is of greater interest to notice that the Labour members introduced into the Workmen's Compensation Act an amendment providing that an increase of pension might be claimed for support of illegitimate children by their maternal parents or grandparents as though the relationship in question arose out of a lawful marriage.[6] Thus proletarian morals demanded a sort of indirect legalization of the free union.

anglais au XIXe siècle 1901, pp. 311–2. A. V. Dicey, *Lectures on the Relation between Law and Public Opinion in England during the nineteenth century*, 1905, pp. 369 sqq. Ray Strachey, *The Cause: A short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain*, 1928, pp. 73, 76, 272 sqq. The feminists however were not satisfied. They demanded that part of the husband's income should be regarded as belonging to the wife as a wage for the work she performed in the home. See the eighth of the nine Bills drafted by Lady Maclaren under the common title of 'The Women's Charter' and introduced in the House of Commons by Sir Charles Maclaren on March 14, 1910.

[1] 47 & 48 Vict., Cap. 68: An Act to amend the Matrimonial Causes Acts (*Matrimonial Causes Act*, 1884).

[2] High Court of Justice Queen's Bench Division: *ex parte* Emily Jackson for a suit of Habeas Corpus, March 16, 1891. Supreme Court of Judicature. Court of Appeal. The same suit, March 17, 19, 1891.

[3] 49 & 50 Vict., Cap. 27: An Act to amend the Law relating to the Guardianship and Custody of Infants (*Guardianship and Custody of Infants Act*, 1886).

[4] 49 & 50 Vict., Cap. 52: An Act to amend the Law relating to the Maintenance of Married Women who shall have been deserted by their Husbands (*Married Women Maintenance in case of Desertion Act*, 1886). The Act was repealed in 1895 and its very brief provisions were incorporated into a more complete Act: 58 & 59 Vict., Cap. 39: An Act to amend the Law relating to the Summary Jurisdiction of Magistrates in reference to Married Women. (*Summary Jurisdiction* [*Married Women*] *Act*, 1895).

[5] 7 Edw. 7, Cap. 47: An Act to amend the Law relating to Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister (*Deceased Wife's Sister Marriage Act*, 1907).

[6] 6 Edw. 7, Cap. 58: Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906, Section 13. In 1911 Keir Hardie attempted by an amendment to the National Insurance Bill to give the unmarried mother an equal right with a married woman to receive Maternity as well as Sickness Benefit. But the Government did not accept his amendment which after a lively debate was rejected by 207 to 95 votes. (H. of C., July 17, 1911; *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1911, 5th Series, vol. xxviii, p. 806.)

But at the same time the insurgent women were turning their efforts in another direction and conducting a campaign peculiar, if not to England, at least to the Anglo-Saxon world. European sex morality rests on the complementary pillars of marriage and prostitution. The latter was the field on which the defenders of women's right won a brilliant victory.

4

The Napoleonic system in France made prostitution a profession, dishonourable, no doubt, but sanctioned and regulated by law. It expressed the attitude of a soldier who, since he condemned a vast number of young men to compulsory celibacy and therefore to irregular forms of sexual union, deemed it his duty both to them and to the country to protect them against the danger of venereal disease. The innovation was calculated to appeal to soldiers of other nations. About 1860 the British high command introduced in India for the use of the soldiers the system of regulated prostitution. Measures entitled Contagious Diseases Acts were passed in 1864, 1866, 1868, and 1869 empowering the police in certain urban centres to classify women on the denunciation of their agents as common prostitutes, liable to imprisonment if they refused to submit to a periodical medical examination, and the system spread rapidly in the seaports and garrison towns.

Public opinion rose in revolt. It was not a question of abolishing a long-established institution which had become an abuse because it was antiquated, but of protecting England against a foreign importation, an 'infection' from the Continent and, what was worse, Napoleonic and French. And had the system of legalized prostitution really reduced venereal disease? On this point statistics were uncertain and susceptible of conflicting interpretation. Too uncertain in any case, contended the opponents of the Contagious Diseases Acts, to justify condemning a woman on the mere denunciation of a policeman to be for the rest of her life a species of slave and pariah. And assuredly too uncertain to warrant the introduction of this servitude into a country whose proud boast it was that for the past two centuries it had been the protagonist of freedom. The movement was led by a woman of the middle class, the wife of a man who occupied an important place

in the scholastic profession, the admirable Josephine Butler.[1] A ministerial candidate, shortly before Governor of Malta, where he had introduced the system of licensed houses, stood for Colchester. Josephine Butler and an entire group of women fired by her enthusiasm conducted a campaign against him. They braved the ordeal of public discussions, open-air meetings, abuse and violence from the mob, and they won the victory. A Royal Commission was appointed to examine the question and after an inquiry, in the course of which John Stuart Mill gave evidence, reported in favour of abolishing licensed prostitution and raising the age of consent from twelve to fourteen.[2] But it required twelve years' propaganda, religious preaching one is tempted to call it rather than political agitation, before the Government, acting on a resolution of the House of Commons,[3] suspended the operation of the Contagious Diseases Acts, and it was not until three years later that they were formally repealed. As regards the Commission's other recommendation that the age of consent should be raised, it was again Josephine Butler who led the way. She passed her cause on to the great journalist, a blend of crusader and charlatan, W. T. Stead. He was converted and a sensational campaign in the Press, not devoid of scandal, led in a few months to the passing of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, which raised the age of consent not to fourteen but sixteen, made procuration a crime, and an attempt to violate a girl under thirteen punishable by flogging or penal servitude.[4] The adoption of these measures, reinforced by further legislation passed from time to time until the eve of the War,[5] was not simply a victory for the women who were their passive beneficiaries. It was a victory for

[1] For this campaign see Josephine Butler, *An Autobiographical Memoir*. Edited by *G. M.* and *L. A. Johnson*, 1909, 3rd Edition, revised and enlarged 1928; also an excellent chapter in Ray Strachey *The Cause*, 1928, pp. 187 sqq.

[2] Report of Royal Commission upon the Administration and Operation of the Contagious Diseases Act, 1871, pp. 19–20.

[3] H. of C., April 20, 1883, Stansfield's motion. (*Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. cclxxviii, pp. 749 sqq.).

[4] 48 & 49 Vict., Cap. 69: An Act to make further provision for the Protection of Women and Girls, the suppression of Brothels and other Purposes (*Criminal Law Amendment Act*, 1885).

[5] 61 & 62 Vict., Cap. 39: An Act to amend the Vagrancy Act, 1824 (*Vagrancy Act*, 1898). Its first section is directed against the bullies. The measure was extended to Scotland by 2 Edw. 7, Cap. 11: An Act to make further provision for the Punishment of Persons Trading in Prostitution in Scotland (*Immoral Traffic (Scotland) Act*, 1902)—2 & 3 Geo. 5, Cap. 20: An Act to amend the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885, the Vagrancy Act, 1889 and the Immoral Traffic (Scotland) Act, 1902 (*Criminal Law Amendment Act*, 1912) which on several points of detail tightens up the previous legislation.

women in another sense in as much as they were the result of an agitation conducted by women, and by methods hitherto the monopoly of the male sex. With this double agitation against the legalization of prostitution and the white-slave traffic, the revolt of women in England began.

5

We must not however imagine that these two campaigns represent the entire history of the movement for the emancipation of women during the concluding years of the nineteenth century. They were accompanied by another agitation which was not the less important because it scarcely engaged the attention of Parliament. Women claimed the right to perform on an equal footing with men the same social functions. By degrees they secured their object. But though success followed success, in 1914 they had not yet won along the entire front. Nor is their victory complete[1] even now.

It had always been admitted that women as well as men could be teachers. The concession was, in fact, founded on the belief in an unalterable difference between the sexes which made it inadvisable for girls to be taught by men. Elementary schools for poor girls, and private schools for the daughters of the middle class had no difficulty in procuring a cheap supply of women teachers, and it was an easy matter for wealthier middle-class parents to obtain governesses to give their daughters at home a very sketchy education which imparted more social accomplishments than intellectual training. And everyone agreed that for little children a mistress was better than a master. Accordingly, professional statistics show from the opening of the nineteenth century an enormous majority of female over male teachers. The growth of education produced a constant increase in the number of women teachers—70,000 in 1851, 172,000 in 1901[2] and according to a ratio a little higher than the increase in the number of male teachers.[3] Another

[1] [1932. Translators note].

[2] In England and Wales 69,340 in 1851; 80,057 in 1861; 94,229 in 1871; 123,995 in 1881; 114,393 in 1891; 171,670 in 1901.

[3] In 1861 72.5 per cent of the teachers were women, in 1871 74.1 per cent, in 1881 72.7 per cent, in 1891 74 per cent, in 1901 74.5 per cent (*Census of England and Wales, 1901*. General Report with Appendices, 1904, p. 86). Between 1901 and 1911 the increase seems to have

effect was a continuous improvement in the quality of their teaching. Governesses received a better training. A new type of private school for girls, far superior to the old, came into existence. In the history of these schools the year 1865 was a decisive date for it was then that after a campaign extending over years Cambridge admitted girls to its local examinations, thereby putting the secondary education of girls as regards the examinations by which it was regulated on an equality with the secondary education of boys. The era of the school boards followed and the schools under their authority in the case of girls as well as boys tended to exceed the standard of primary education. To educate mistresses for a teaching of better quality than before, training schools became necessary and in turn teachers for the training schools. Could the latter be refused the advantages of a university education? If not, why should they not be thrown open at the same time to young girls of good family whose brothers were undergraduates of Oxford or Cambridge? The conquest of the universities was one of the great objectives pursued by women during the last third of the nineteenth century.

It was not easy. The agitators were faced by a double opposition, from the universities—two clubs of conservative old bachelors—and from parents alarmed at the prospect of mixing the sexes at adolescence. The first step was to found by subscriptions raised for the purpose, a college for women twenty-five miles from Cambridge. Enthusiastic Fellows accepted the fatigue of the journey to and fro to give lectures to the students. Then the college was transferred to a distance of two miles. Finally the plunge was taken and another women's college opened in the town itself. At Oxford two were founded. But every precaution was taken against scandal. The girl students could not go out unaccompanied and attended the lectures in groups in charge of a chaperon. Nor were they admitted from the outset to the same examinations as the young men. The first concession, made by the University of Cambridge, was to communicate the subjects of an examination to friendly professors who held an unofficial examination of the women students parallel to that which the men were taking at the

been greater among the men than the women. But the *Census of England and Wales, 1911* (vol. x, *Occupations and Industries*, Part I, p. xxi) explains this semblance. 'In order to obtain a better measure of the increase in the teaching profession, the numbers of ages twenty years and upward at the two censuses may be compared, and these show an increase of 30.4 per cent among males and of 33.6 per cent among females.'

same time. But the movement which was equipping the great cities with universities enabled the women to win at a single stroke an important victory in this field. A Statute of 1875 had expressly authorized these new universities to confer their degrees on women. When in 1878 the University of London became a teaching-university it immediately made use of the right. It laid down the principle of absolute equality between the sexes. All degrees and positions in the teaching body were thrown open to women students. The Victoria University followed suit in 1880, the University of Wales in 1893, Durham College in 1895. Oxford and Cambridge could not refuse to make concessions. In 1881 and in 1884 Cambridge first, then Oxford admitted women students to the same examinations as men, though they refused to confer degrees on the successful candidates.[1]

It is surprising that the claim of women to practise medicine met with stronger opposition than their claim to teach. For it had always been admitted that there was nothing incompatible with a woman's nature in the professions of midwife and sick nurse. Moreover, if it was more suitable that women should teach women, why did not the same principle apply to medical treatment? Nevertheless, the opposition was formidable and determined. It was, it would seem, a question of professional interest. The doctors who were powerfully organized and regarded medicine as a commercial profession were defending a lucrative monopoly.

The great battle was fought simultaneously with the battle to force an entrance into the universities. Often both fronts were combined and the victory was, at least apparently, won on both at the same time. It was about 1870 that three young girls attempted to storm the medical faculty at Edinburgh University, braving the coarse jests of their male comrades and what were nothing short of riots among the students encouraged by the professors. They succeeded in securing admission to the lectures and in passing some examinations but in the end the Senate of the University refused them the right to practice. The women adopted other manœuvres. They attempted to enter the medical profession by way of the corporation of apothecaries—by taking a midwife's diploma or obtaining the degree of doctor of medicine

[1] Ray Strachey, *The Cause*, pp. 141 sqq., 255 sqq. Barbara Stephen, *Emily Davies and Girton College*, 1927.

on the Continent where in most countries it was open to women. These attempts were always baffled. They founded in London a medical school for women. The girls who had attended it were not admitted to a single hospital in the metropolis. At last victory seemed assured when in 1875 an Act was passed permitting universities to confer degrees on women and another forbidding the Royal College of Surgeons to exclude them.[1] Even before the University of London in 1878 had laid down the principle of complete sex equality, the two Irish Colleges of Physicians had admitted women and one of the London hospitals had accepted students from the Women's Medical School. The decennial census returns enable us to follow this invasion. In the census of 1881 lady doctors made their appearance for the first time—twenty-five in England and Wales. In 1891 there were a hundred, 212 in 1901, 477 in 1911. Nevertheless, in these years before 1914 they were still faced with insurmountable difficulties. The new national services indeed offered them an increasing number of openings, the management of schools for mothers, infant welfare centres and crèches and inspectorships under the Ministry of Health. But they were very rarely admitted to study in the hospitals and women medical students were usually obliged to seek better facilities at Vienna or in America. Nor would the hospitals accept women doctors. Certain bodies, for instance the Ophthalmological Society and the Society for the Study of Infantile Diseases, refused to admit them to membership. We even hear of a medical journal which refused to accept articles signed by women.[2]

6

The old universities of Oxford and Cambridge continued to refuse to admit women to the examinations in medicine, theology, and law. As regards medicine this was of no consequence since women could now obtain a doctorate at all the other universities of the kingdom. As regards theology, it might be argued that by excluding women Oxford and Cambridge shared the opinion

[1] 38 & 39 Vict., Cap. 43: An Act to amend the Medical Acts so far as relates to the Royal College of Surgeons of England (*Royal College of Surgeons Act*, 1875) Section 2.

[2] Ray Strachey *The Cause*, pp. 166 sqq., 251 sqq. Dr. Flora Murray, The Position of Women in Medicine and Surgery (*New Statesman*, November 1, 1913, *Special Supplement*, pp. xvi-xvii).

universal throughout Christendom that a woman could not be a priest or a minister. What was the use of giving her a degree when she could not become a teacher? But the Salvation Army had made the innovation of giving women an equal place with men among their officers[1] and therefore, in so far as a religious body without sacraments and therefore without ordination may be regarded as a church, it was a church in which women violated the principle laid down by St. Paul that women should not 'teach' but 'keep silence'. The movement spread to the other religious bodies. In 1874 the Wesleyan Conference allowed a woman elected by one of the synods to take part in its deliberations.[2] The Anglican Church allowed a woman to become a deaconess and to sit on the parish councils.[3] Militant feminists cherished the hope that the day was near when, if not the Established Church, at least the sects would consent to ordain women.[4] Finally, as regards the law, the exclusion maintained by Oxford and Cambridge corresponded to the unyielding determination of the legal profession. Could the Inns of Court lawfully admit women? Some maintained that they could; but it would be a very long time before they made use of the right, if it existed. Should the word 'person' in the Solicitors' Act of 1843 be interpreted as meaning man or woman? The courts replied in the negative.[5] But could England much longer lag behind the United States where 20,000 women practised as lawyers, several of the Colonies,

[1] By a decision taken in 1875 (Ray Strachey, *The Cause*, p. 214). Some innovators appealed to another text of St. Paul, where he permits women to prophesy, 1 Cor. xi, 5, 6, also to Acts ii 17–18, xxi 9–10, to prove that the prohibition was not absolute. (The Dean of Wells, 'Ought Women to Preach? 1. The Ministry of Women', *Contemporary Review*, January–June 1884, vol. xlv, pp. 43 sqq.).

[2] A committee appointed by the Conference to examine the question reported the following year in favour of admitting women, and if the report was rejected by the Conference it was by a very narrow majority.

[3] In virtue of a decision taken in July 1914, by the Representative Council of the Anglican Church. The voting proves that the Bishops were more favourable to the proposal than the priests, the priests more favourable than the laity.

[4] And even the Establishment: Flora Murray, 'The Position of Women and Surgery' (*New Statesman*, November 1, 1913, *Special Supplement*, p. xvii), 'It must be recognized that a university education—even for women—leads directly to the door of the Bar, *the Church* and the Medical Profession, and that the admission to these fields of learning and enterprise and remuneration is only a question of time.' So far as the sects are concerned the forecast has been realized. See the decision of the Wesleyan Conference of 1925. Cf. Albert Peel, *The Free Churches 1903-1926*, 1927, p. 444: 'Another way in which the outlook has been broadened is seen in the fuller and freer acceptance of the service of women, who now not only do the work they have done so well before, but are trained as ministers, elected as deacons and officers, and called to equal service with men.'

[5] Bebb v. Law Society (Supreme Court of Judicature. Chancery Division. July 2, 1913, Court of Appeal, December 9, 10, 1913).

and France? A Bill was about to be introduced into the Commons to enable women to become solicitors and the Lord Chancellor and the Prime Minister promised to support it.[1] The final struggle was at hand.

Though women could not become barristers or solicitors they were not totally debarred from the purlieus of the law. They entered lawyers' offices as clerks, shorthand writers, and typists.[2] Simultaneously, they invaded the world of business.[3] They were indeed prevented by the rules of these bodies from becoming outside or inside brokers, or sitting on the governing body of the Stock Exchange or Bank. But here too, as throughout the hierarchy of commerce and industry, they could occupy positions which, if subordinate, were nevertheless positions of trust and in which their punctuality and prompt obedience gave complete satisfaction to their employers. For the first time women were making their appearance as insurance agents and commercial travellers. In the 'seventies when the great struggle for university degrees was raging, there was not a woman in the City. Twenty years later they were still few and attracted attention. Now they were a multitude and you jostled past them without taking notice.

At the same time, they entered the public services. Here and especially in the Post Office it was nothing short of an invasion. The number of persons employed by the central government or local authorities was estimated by the census of 1911 at some 300,000, of whom 249,000 were men, 51,000 women. Comparison with the figures of 1901 shows a total increase of 46 per cent representing an increase of 42.3 per cent for men, 69.4 per cent for women.[4] Nor was the new invasion of the same nature as the

[1] Lord Haldane's reply to a deputation from *The Committee for the Admission of Women to the Solicitors' Profession*, March 27, 1914.

[2] The census of 1871 enumerates 51 women 'connected with law', the census of 1881, 100 'law clerks and others connected with law'. In 1891 there were 166 'clerks', in 1901 367. The progress becomes striking during the following decade. The number of 'law clerks' of both sexes which had increased by a quarter during the previous decade increased only by a twentieth. But whereas the number of male clerks showed an insignificant increase, from 34,066 to 34,106 the number of women rose from 367 to 2,159.

[3] The number of women employed as commercial and business clerks rose from 7,749 in 1881 to 23,050 in 1891, 74,620 in 1901 and 153,973 in 1911. In other words it had increased twentyfold while the entire number of employees of both sexes had merely doubled: 212,067 in 1881, 420,538 in 1911.

[4] *Census of England and Wales, 1911*, 1914, vol. x, p. xiii. We must however bear in mind that the vast majority of these women were employed in the Post Office. See *Royal Commission on Civil Service, 4th Report* 1914, p. 22. 'The Board of Education has, since 1898, recruited some female clerks (of whom about twenty are now employed) by means of the examination held to fill the Women Clerkships in the General Post Office, and a

invasion of the factories by women a century earlier. The women had been driven into the factories by the necessity of earning a livelihood and their presence was not in itself a triumph of feminism. It rendered the champions of women's rights no other service than to furnish them with an argument against their opponents. 'You want, you say, to keep women at home, why then do you set them to the forced labour of your factories?' Now, however, women entered offices of their free will and to find freedom.

7

The young girl who leads a young man's life adopts his manners. She no longer curtsies on entering a drawing-room nor awaits her elders' invitation to be seated. She talks with her back against the mantelpiece puffing at her cigarette. All these gestures are signals of independence. They proclaim that she is in no hurry to get married and that when she does marry she is determined to maintain her independence in face of her husband and, if need be, in opposition to him. What Blackstone termed with such unction 'the mysterious reverence of the nuptial tie', is a thing of the past. An entire literature has come into being which urges women to revolt. Grant Allen was the first to invite English girls to imitate The Woman who Did, the woman who refuses to consecrate by legal wedlock her union with the man she loves. In her ponderous and grotesque novel *The Heavenly Twins* Sarah Grand branded masculine immorality and advised her women readers to refuse to consummate legal marriage with a dissolute husband and thus shake off the yoke of the male when he was unworthy. Among the rebels the outstanding figures were Ibsen, Shaw, and H. G. Wells, who had their disciples and fanatics. One young

few more of this class have been taken into the office of the Registrar General, in addition to the considerable force of women which has on several occasions been employed temporarily in that department on work connected with the decennial census. The office staff of the Public Trustee is a mixed male and female one, and female clerks have been introduced into the centres of the Labour Exchange offices, but these situations are at present on a temporary basis. With these exceptions and excluding female typists who are employed in many departments in increasing numbers, but form a class by themselves, it remains true at the present time that women have not procured admission to the clerical service of the State. They are, however, in growing, though still small, numbers, employed with advantage to the community as inspectors under various departments, where they discharge useful functions in connection with women and children. Their employment under the Local Education Authorities as teachers in the Public Elementary and Secondary Schools lies outside the scope of our inquiry.'

woman would say 'I will be Norah' and for no serious reason leave a husband who in her opinion was attempting to treat her as a doll: Another 'I will be Vivian Warren,' quit the home of an unworthy mother and refuse a fortune amassed by immoral methods. But for a logical Socialist what capital has been acquired in a manner less infamous than Mrs. Warren's money? 'I will be Ann Veronica': 'I will be Isabel Rivers.' In 1909 H. G. Wells published his *Ann Veronica*, in 1911 his *New Macchiavelli*, in 1913 his *Passionate Friends*, three novels, two of which are autobiographical. He advocates a system in which the woman alone will be responsible to society for her children, and receive a bounty from the State for every child she bears and brings up. The men with whom she entertains free relations will be conscious of no bond with her children beyond sentiments of free affection. It is with a smile that we hear Hugh Price Hughes at the opening of the century congratulate himself on the fact that the Protestantism, the Puritanism of the sects had imparted to British feminism a moral austerity which had preserved it from the immorality that tainted the movement in some foreign countries.[1] Nevertheless, on further reflection we become aware of a survival of Puritanism —certainly one of which Price Hughes never thought—at work in these defiances of traditional morality. These bold young girls flung themselves into free love not so much at the urge of sexual passion as to perform a duty, to prove to the world and to themselves that they had learned the lessons of Shaw and Wells. They wrestled with the reluctance of blushing young men until they bent them to their cold determination. 'I've had a biological training,' declared Ann Veronica. 'I'm a hard young woman.'[2]

It is not without hesitation that I approach such a difficult subject. How deep did this movement for the emancipation of women go, and what in fact did it signify?

There was an industrial proletariat where the morals of the young people were very free and custom simply required a young man to marry the girl whom he had made pregnant. And there was a rural proletariat where it even allowed young men to enter into trial unions. They did not marry until they were certain the

[1] *Life of Hugh Price Hughes* by his daughter, pp. 254–5.

[2] *Ann Veronica*, chap. xiv. Cf. John Stuart Mill, *On the Subjection of Women*, p. 123: 'An Oriental thinks that women are by nature peculiarly voluptuous: see the violent abuse of them on this ground in Hindoo writings. An Englishman usually thinks that they are by nature cold.'

girl was not barren. Once married the stern law of poverty and labour sufficed to compel husband and wife to fidelity. And there was an aristocracy, an aristocracy of birth and an aristocracy of wealth—where leisure engenders laxity and laxity inconstancy, in which men and women become accustomed to live above the level of ordinary morals and enjoy themselves on the produce of other people's morality. It was only in the middle class—whose boundaries above and below were not easy to draw but whose character was very definite—in which those habits prevailed of self-imposed discipline and voluntary obedience to the law of work and the law of marital fidelity which are the essence of morality. But the feature of the feminist revolt of the early twentieth century which seemed so disquieting was that it arose in this very middle class which, it appeared, was beginning to doubt itself. In England more than in any other country the middle class had succeeded in imposing its culture upon society and exacting from the classes above and below it at least an outward respect for its moral prejudices. Now England was ceasing to be middle class.

If, however, we view the situation from another angle and consider the relations between the sexes without respect to class we may perhaps be disposed to adopt a different interpretation of the change which was in process while fully admitting its far-reaching character. To maintain that the woman differs from the man is not to maintain that she is his inferior. It means that she is different and that her distinctive qualities though of equal or, if you will, higher social value than his give her activities a different direction. It is a striking and a significant fact that in all the commercial or administrative careers now being opened to women the latter were content to occupy subordinate positions. In the government departments all the higher positions carrying with them authority remained closed to women. And their salaries remained lower than men's.[1] In countless instances a rule was in force that a woman must leave her post on marriage and return to the home.[2] Was

[1] See on this point the unsuccessful efforts made in 1872 by Miss Davies and Mrs. Garrett Anderson. (Ray Strachey, *The Cause*, p. 227) and the criticisms of the anti-feminist, Sir Almroth Wright, in a letter to *The Times* (March 1912). See also on the eve of the War the debates at the annual conference of the National Union of Teachers, April 14, 1914. A motion brought forward by women demanding equal salaries was rejected by a majority of 58,483 to 11,017 votes.

[2] See for instances the debates at meetings of the London County Council on April 8, and July 28, 1914. Margaret Wynne Nevinson can still write in 1923: 'We have had many examples lately of how municipal authorities hamper and restrict married women in their work; a woman doctor was lately dismissed in a London borough for the crime of mar-

this simply a survival from the period when man ruled over woman and, the period of transition once passed, would a system soon exist which made no differentiation between the sexes? We cannot forget the admission implied in the complaint made by an uncompromising feminist in 1913 that, in the world of business, women 'are not sufficiently ambitious', and that 'they seem too often content with the poorly-paid routine posts and too little inclined to venture anything on their own account'.[1] The question forces itself upon us whether the two sexes are not so distinguished by the law of their natures that the man is prone to command, the woman to self devotion, so that when a man claims rights it is to increase his power, when a woman claims them it is on the contrary to have further opportunity of service. We cannot fail to be struck by the large number of women who at the very moment when they came boldly into the open to urge their claims professed conservative political opinions. The others very seldom professed themselves Liberals but went straight to the Socialist camp. Was this the sign of a passionate nature which loves extremes? It would seem on the contrary that they were attracted by Socialism not as a more revolutionary form of Liberalism, a movement for complete emancipation, but because they saw it as in many respects a reaction against the Liberalism which had originally demanded the emancipation of women. Its appeal was its policy of a grandmotherly legislation which did not shrink from interference with every detail of private life to ensure the welfare of the weak and which treated society as a magnified home.[2] We are therefore compelled to ask how far the women's

riage; and Education Committees have always discouraged and in some places forbidden women to continue teaching after marriage though many experts maintain that women who are mothers have more sympathy and skill in the management of small children than the single' (*The Legal Wrongs of Married Women*, p. 6). And in 1926 the custom was formally sanctioned by a regulation of the London County Council (Standing Order 395). For the problem of married women's labour as it presents itself in private business see Clémentine Black's interesting study, *Married Women's Work. Being the Report of an Inquiry undertaken by the Women's Industrial Council*, 1915.

[1] Mrs. W. L. Courtney, 'New Types of Subordinate Women Brain-Workers' (*New Statesman*, November 1, 1913, *Special Supplement*, p. xix).

[2] This was one of the reasons for which Herbert Spencer, the thorough-going opponent of Socialism, was equally hostile to woman suffrage. 'It would aid and stimulate all parts of State administration, the great mass of which are necessarily antagonistic to personal freedom. Men in their political actions are far too much swayed by proximate evils and benefits; and women would be thus swayed far more. Given some kind of social suffering to be cured or some boon to be got, and only the quite exceptional woman would be able to appreciate detrimental reactions that would be entailed by legislative action. Political foresight of this kind, uncommon enough in men, is extremely rare in women' (Letter to

revolt must be interpreted as an attempt to achieve equality with men or on the contrary as an attempt to reform society according to the ideal of their sex, to make themselves masculine or society feminine. This doubt must be borne in mind when we study, as we now must, the last of the feminist claims—the right to vote and be elected to Parliament, and to be admitted to executive office—the claim which may truly be said to have absorbed the entire energies of the feminists of both sexes during the years immediately preceding the War. Whatever the purpose, libertarian or conservative, which in the last resort inspired these

John Stuart Mill, August 9, 1867). Mrs. Ramsay MacDonald, one of the pioneers of British neo-Socialism, considered the essential function of Socialism to be the protection of the home. J. Ramsay MacDonald writes (*Margaret Ethel MacDonald*, p. 233): 'She once defined Socialism as "The State of Homes"' and he himself stated in 1908: 'Socialism is essential to family life . . . the idea of divorce is foreign to the Socialist state' (Haslemere, May 11, 1908; *Labour Leader*, May 15, 1908). Cf. the interesting biological and sociological observations presented by Walter Heape in a book entitled *Sex Antagonism*, 1913. According to him the male sex is essentially individualistic, whereas the female sex represents the subordination of the individual to the species. The feminists protested against these statements. But often they unintentionally confirmed them. See Beatrice Webb, *My Apprenticeship*, p. 276: 'It is no use shifting one's eyes from the facts that there is an increasing number of women to whom a matrimonial career is shut and who seek a masculine reward for masculine qualities. . . . I think these strong women have a great future before them in the solution of social questions. They are not just inferior men; they may have masculine faculty, but they have the woman's temperament and the stronger they are the more distinctly feminine they are in this.' You may perhaps reply that Mrs. Webb has never been more than a very moderate feminist and was not a feminist at all when she wrote these lines in November 1885. Consider then the admission implied in an article by Lady Betty Balfour, indeed in its very title, 'Motherhood and the State' (*New Statesman*, November 1, 1913, p. xii) 'In the working of the modern state there is more of [this] spirit of motherhood than has probably ever been exhibited before throughout the historic ages. . . . It is significant of the new spirit of social service that the undergraduates at the Universities now discuss practical, social, and economic problems where formerly they would have discussed theology or literature. Symptoms of this spirit are yearly more apparent in our national legislation and in the subjects discussed at international gatherings . . . symptoms of the same thing, the awakening of a spirit of motherhood in the State.' Cf. the anonymous article entitled 'Women in Industry. Character and Organization,' *The Times*, April 29, 1913: '. . . The women who are the outstanding figures in the Labour movement prefer Socialism and probably the ablest of the younger generation whom they have trained have strong Socialistic leanings; but their socialism is assuredly not of a revolutionary type. *It might almost be said to be domestic.*' Lucien Romier (*Promotion de la Femme*, 1930, p. 60) explains the success of the feminist movement in English-speaking countries by the fact that there women differ less from men than elsewhere, though the men are more feminine, not the women more masculine. 'By nature women dislike the abstract, speculative analysis, the thrust and parry of logical argument, the criticism which questions everything before it attempts to construct, all of which are native characteristics of the Mediterranean race and opposed to the Nordic mentality. You will bore the average Englishman and a woman of any country if you speak of the ideal constitution of a State, but the same topic will arouse the passionate interest of a docker at the Piræus, a grocer of Toulouse, and a professor of Salamanca. Without denying the historical effects of chance, we shall perceive that the supremacy at present enjoyed by the Anglo-Saxon and Nordic peoples over the Mediterranean and Oriental races represents in the last resort the triumph of this feminine type of mentality which apprehends and pursues a practical aim without worrying about barren logic.'

women, the methods they employed to attain their object and give their cause the advertisement of scandal were undoubtedly anarchic.[1]

8

Bentham had claimed equality of political rights for both sexes but his disciple James Mill had parted company with him on this point and the Chartists after preliminary hesitations finally decided against his programme. They were content with asking for the universal suffrage of men, manhood suffrage. When however John Stuart Mill in his *Representative Government* and *Subjection of Women* returned to Bentham's doctrine the time seemed at last to have arrived for it to bear fruit. More even than these two books the important speech Mill delivered in the House of Commons pleading that woman suffrage should be introduced into the Reform Bill passed that year forced the matter upon the attention of the Press and public.[2] The amendment was of course rejected but Mill and his friends convinced themselves that the reform would be effected before many years had passed and would precede and facilitate all the other reforms—the grant to married women of the right to own property, the abolition of State-regulated prostitution to which the efforts of the feminists were directed at the time.[3] As we know, the exact contrary hap-

[1] For the strictly political emancipation of women see *History of Women Suffrage* in 6 volumes (vol. i, *1848–1861*, 1881; vol. ii, *1861–1876*, 1887; vol. iii, *1876–1885*, 1887; vol. iv, *1885–1900*, 1902; vols. v and vi, *1900–1920*, 1922). The first three volumes were written by Elizabeth Lady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Mathilda Joslyn Gap, the fourth by Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper, the fifth and sixth by Ida Husted Harper. It is a monumental American compilation chiefly concerned with the United States, containing chapters which deal with England and the British Colonies. A. E. Metcalfe, *Women's Effort. A Chronicle of British Women's Fifty Years' Struggle for Citizenship (1865–1914) with an Introduction by Lawrence Housman*, 1917. Margaret Wynne Nevinson, *Five Years' Struggle for Freedom. A History of the Suffrage Movement from 1908 to 1912*, 1913. See further the work already mentioned by Ray Strachey, *The Cause*, *passim* and for the 'suffragette' movement the works quoted later in a note to p. 307.

[2] H. of C., May 20, 1867 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. clxxxvii, pp. 817 sqq.). For Mill's intervention see the remarks of the *Annual Register* for the year, p. 72: 'The next Amendment was of rather a singular character; it was moved by Mr. J. S. Mill, the object being to enable women to vote. The discussion assumed a somewhat jocular character; but the proposition was advocated with serious earnestness by Mr. Mill.'

[3] John Stuart Mill to Florence Nightingale, December 31, 1867: '. . . What, however, constitutes an even more pressing and practical reason for endeavouring to obtain the political enfranchisement of women, instead of endeavouring to sweep away any or all of their social grievances, is, that I believe it will be positively easier to attain this reform than to attain any single one of all the others, all of which must inevitably follow from it. To prefer to sweep away any of these others first, is as though we were to prefer to cut

pened. Whereas these reforms were extorted by the action outside Parliament of women who had no vote, the question of their political rights continued to hang fire.

Between Mill's death and the year 1906 the House of Commons had voted on four occasions in favour of woman suffrage. But in every instance it had been simply a declaration of principle and the majority, always a mixed majority of Liberals and Conservatives, were perfectly well aware that no Cabinet, Liberal or Conservative, would make woman suffrage a government measure. At first sight it surprises us to find such a persistent opposition to the women's claim, to which the latter would reply by a fanaticism equal to their opponents' obstinacy. To allow women to become professors and doctors, to invade the offices of lawyers and men of business was nothing less than to revolutionize their life and in consequence the state of society as a whole. But would the social order be greatly perturbed if every six years old maids, young girls, even married women, silently dropped their vote in the ballot box? Did not husbands allow their wives to take an active part in their electoral campaigns? Had not women been permitted ever since 1834 to vote for the Boards of Guardians who administered the Poor Law? Had they not possessed since 1869 the municipal vote and since 1870 the power to elect and be elected to the School Boards? In 1888 they had obtained the right to vote for the new County Councils. And had not the Local Government Act of 1894 when it set up district and parish councils granted women the right not only to vote for these bodies but to sit on them and in addition to sit on the Boards of Guardians?[1] Never-

away branch after branch: giving more labour to each branch than we need do to the trunk of the tree.' (*The Letters of John Stuart Mill*, vol. ii, pp. 102–3.) To Sir Charles Dilke, May 28, 1870: 'I am in great spirits about our prospects and think we are almost within as many years of victory as I formerly thought of decades' (ibid., vol. ii, p. 254).

[1] The following is an attempt to summarize the extremely confused and illogical English legislation in respect of women's civic rights as it existed at the end of the nineteenth century. The *Poor Law Amendment Act* of 1834 (4 & 5 Will. IV, Cap. 76 S. 34) gave the right to vote for the boards of guardians which it set up to the ratepayers. But among these ratepayers were women and they made use of the right attached to their payment of rates. On the other hand, the Act of 1835 on 'municipal corporations' (5 & 6 Will. IV, Cap. 76 sec. 9) reserved the right to vote to 'every male person of full age' who fulfilled certain conditions. It was only in 1869 (32 & 33 Vict., Cap. 55: An Act to shorten the Time of Residence required as a Qualification for the Municipal Franchise and to make provision for other purposes, sec. 9) that the 'feminists' of the period secured an amendment providing that all the words in the Act 'implying the male sex' should be regarded as applicable to women 'in so far as concerns the right to vote'. The following year when the *Education Act* of 1870 (33 & 34 Vict., Cap. 75 sec. 29) set up to administer the new law school boards very similar in constitution to the boards of guardians set up by the Poor

theless there must have been a deep-seated reason for this stubborn opposition which was by no means confined to England. And in all probability it was this.

There is one right which women have never claimed in the West,[1] to serve in the army as privates or officers.[2] But from time immemorial the performance of political functions has been associated with the performance of military. It is on those who defend the country that the office of governing it devolves. It was no doubt this military conception of government which consciously or unconsciously inspired the opposition of public opinion to the political claims of feminism when it became increasingly tolerant of the rest. Certainly women might have a share in dealing with

Law of 1834 the Statute was deliberately drafted, as the Government declared (H. of C., June 16, 1870; *Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. ccii, p. 259) in such terms as to enable women to vote for the new boards and be elected to them. Could it be concluded from this that the Act of 1869 which gave women the right to vote for municipal councillors also permitted their election? In fact, no women made the experiment and when an important consolidating Act was passed in 1882 dealing with the municipal councils (45 & 46 Vict., Cap. 50) a clause in the Statute declared in the very terms of the Act of 1869, that a woman was put on an equal footing with a man 'so far as the right to vote' is concerned and for the rest kept silence. When, therefore, the *Local Government Act* (51 & 52 Vict., Cap. 41) which set up the County Councils was passed in 1888 and two women were elected to the London County Council the courts pronounced the election illegal on the ground that the Act as regards the conditions of election referred to the Act of 1882 which in turn coming after the Act of 1869 must be regarded as excluding women from the right to be elected. (Beresford-Hope v. Lady Sandhurst, Supreme Court of Judicature, Queen's Bench Division, March 18, April 14, 1889; Court of Appeal, May 8, 15, 16, 1889.) It was in fact expressly laid down the same year by the *Local Government (Scotland) Act*, 1889 (52 & 53 Vict., Cap. 50 sec. 9) that no woman could be elected a county councillor. We may add that in 1894 the feminists won an important victory when the *Local Government Act* of that year (56 & 57 Vict., Cap. 73) gave both sexes an equal right to vote for the parish councils and boards of guardians, and be elected to them and provided that marriage should not deprive a woman of the civic rights she had hitherto enjoyed. But very little progress in this direction was made during the years which followed. If the *Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) (Women) Act* of 1896 (58 & 59 Vict., Cap. 5) gave the women the same right to be elected to the Boards of Guardians as they already possessed in England and the *Local Government (Ireland) Act* of 1898 (61 & 62 Vict., Cap. 37) which set up County Councils in Ireland gave women as in England the right to vote but not to be elected, women were not entitled to sit on the Borough Councils set up in London by the *London Government Act* of 1899 (62 & 63 Vict., Cap. 14) though they had always possessed the right to sit on the vestries which the Act abolished and the *Education Act* of 1902 (2 Edw. 7, Cap. 42) by abolishing the school boards on which a large number of women had seats and transferring their functions to the County Councils for which women were ineligible constituted in this respect a serious setback to the cause of feminism.

[1] Mrs. Pember Reeves certainly writes as follows (*New Statesman*, November 1, 1913, *Special Supplement*, p. xxiv): 'To say with seriousness that women should be eligible for positions in the army . . . provokes both horror and ridicule. But that does not prevent the statement being true.' But see how she justifies her assertion. She continues: 'Hundreds of women . . . would make able officials in the commissariat and other departments of the army and the navy. Florence Nightingale revolutionized certain aspects of the British army.' Evidently what Mrs. Pember Reeves is claiming for women is access to the non-military departments of the army.

[2] Written 1932, Editor's note.

questions of poor relief, education, and the provision and maintenance of roads. These were domestic questions. And when the women who opposed female suffrage founded an anti-suffragist league of which Mrs. Humphry Ward was President they were careful to state expressly that all these problems are within the competence of women. But on the other hand these municipal elections had little interest for the public. Only a small minority of the voters took the trouble to record their votes. But it was the great consultations of the people which were milestones in the history of the nation. If more insistently every year women were pressing their claim to share in these it was not simply to defend the distinctive interests of their sex. They had won many victories by other means and the trade unionists were discovering that to secure the immediate satisfaction of their demands the strike was a more powerful weapon than the ballot box. What women claimed was the right to perform the highest duty of citizenship in the interest of the entire community.

9

After the period of successful agitation which had marked the years when Gladstone and Disraeli guided the destinies of the nation, the close of the nineteenth century had marked a halt in the progress of feminism as in that of other democratic ideas. But when a Liberal revival followed the Boer War the question of the political emancipation of women, as we should expect, came again to the forefront. In 1904 a motion in the House of Commons in favour of women's suffrage was passed by a majority of 114, the largest it had yet obtained.[1] Its champions could point out that on this point England now lagged behind the rest of the English-speaking world. New Zealand had possessed women suffrage since 1893, South Australia since 1894, Western Australia since 1899, New South Wales since 1902, the Australian Commonwealth from its foundation that very year. Tasmania adopted it in 1903 and Queensland would adopt it in 1905. In the United States of America four Western States had admitted women to the suffrage, Wyoming in 1869, Colorado in 1893, Utah in 1895,

[1] H. of C., March 16, 1904. Sir Charles Maclaren's motion (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxxxi, pp. 1331 sqq.).

Idaho in 1896, and its extension to the entire country seemed inevitable.[1] And in Europe itself, almost at England's door, in 1901 two years after the extension of the suffrage to all male citizens, Norway had granted the franchise to about half the women above twenty-five years of age.[2] The moment was near when the Liberal party would be once more in office. It was professedly the party of reform. Every champion of reform believed himself to have a claim upon it. Feminist propaganda redoubled and concentrated its efforts on securing political rights for women.

There was an old society of women 'suffragists' founded under the auspices of Mill in 1867. In that year the London National Society for Women's Suffrage was formed which, working in close co-operation with a number of similar societies in the provinces, employed all the methods of legal propaganda current in England and brought peaceful pressure to bear on Members of Parliament. In 1888 it had been embarrassed by an attempt of its Liberal members to introduce their party organizations into the society and gradually to annex it to the Liberal party. The attempt gave rise to quarrels and a split which weakened the Society. But about the beginning of the new century the two rival groups became reconciled and united to form the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. How long would it be before the Union's patient methods were victorious? Meanwhile its members abandoned themselves to the pleasure which English people enjoy so keenly of founding groups, gathering recruits—they began to come in in large numbers—drawing up rules, electing presidents, secretaries, and treasurers, and organizing public meetings in the customary style.[3] But side by side with the National Union a new society came into existence of a very different

[1] For the progress of women suffrage in the United States about this period see Frank Foxcroft 'Women Suffrage in the United States of America' (*Nineteenth Century*, November 1909, vol. lvi, pp. 833 sqq.) who however points out that since 1898 the movement seemed to have come to a sudden halt owing to the obvious indifference of the women.

[2] Marie Blehr Schlytter, 'The Women's Movement in Norway' (*New Statesman*, February 7, 1914, pp. 554–6).

[3] Ray Strachey, *The Cause*, p. 309: 'Within a year or two they had evolved a technique of democracy inside their own ranks *which became in itself an absorbing interest*.' Cf. ibid., p. 105. The writer is speaking of the formation of the first suffragist committee in 1867: 'For a fortnight the little committee worked, delighted with the distinguished and respectable signatures which came in and *enjoying themselves to the full*'; and a little later (pp. 118–119), speaking of the first public meetings held by the women: '*Delightful* as the actual occasion was . . . the new style of meeting did not escape unfriendly comment. . . . It was undoubtedly very hard work for those first speakers and very agitating work too. . . On the other hand it must have been much more *entertaining* than public meetings have since become, *more full of novelty and excitement and of the sense of real adventure*.'

character, founded in 1903, the Women's Social and Political Union. Its founders, Mrs. Pankhurst and her daughter Christabel, women of a middle-class family which for years had devoted itself body and soul to Socialist propaganda, would appear to have desired at first to give the new feminist organization a distinctively Socialist character. They would have liked to make it the feminine section of the Labour Representation Committee which was being formed at the time. Then the political beliefs of its foundresses changed. By degrees they transferred their allegiance from Socialism to the Conservative party. It was its violent methods which distinguished the Women's Social and Political Union from the National Union. And as the years passed these methods dictated an original form of constitution. The Union possessed no written constitution, no rule which might hamper its leaders' decisions. Anyone willing to subscribe, subscribed as much as he wished and the zealots who led the organization made whatever use of the funds they pleased.[1] The 'suffragettes' as the militants of the new movement[2] soon came to be called to distinguish them from the 'suffragists' of the old National Union had no control over the central organization whose orders they blindly obeyed.

In 1897 in the course of the debates in the House of Commons on a feminist Bill introduced that year, a member speaking in support of the Bill had pointed out the obstacles with which women were faced when they attempted to urge their claims. 'It is contrary', he said, 'to the nature of women to take part in those formidable demonstrations which from time to time mark the activity of political enthusiasm among men.'[3] Mrs. Pankhurst was to prove his psychology false by showing that women could organize demonstrations which, if they were of a different charac-

[1] For this new agitation see E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette. The History of the Women's Militant Suffrage Movement, 1905–1910*, 1911 and especially her excellent work, far more thorough in its treatment than the former, *The Suffragette Movement. An Intimate Account of Persons and Ideals*, 1931. Also Annie Kenney's entertaining *Memoirs of a Militant*, 1924.

[2] The word makes its appearance between inverted commas in the *Daily Mail* at the beginning of 1906 (January 10, February 12) and it is to this paper that Sylvia Pankhurst ascribes its invention. (*The Suffragette*, p. 62 n.) Two years later it is in current use. See A. L. Lowell, *The Government of England*, vol. i, p. 216; (The preface is dated April 1908): 'Many women are agitating for it very vigorously, and the most enthusiastic of them have sought martyrdom by refusing to pay taxes, by creating a disturbance in the ladies' gallery of the House of Commons, and by getting arrested for speech-making in Palace Yard. They are known as Suffragettes.'

[3] H. of C., February 3, 1897, Atherley-Jones' speech (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. xlv, p. 1182).

ter from the riots in which the male sex had indulged in the past, were no less formidable. On October 13, 1905, Sir Edward Grey took the chair at a great Liberal meeting held in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester. Everyone knew that a general election was imminent and that the Liberal party must decide upon its programme. A number of women, members of the Social and Political Union, waving small flags which bore the words Votes for Women and interrupting at every turn the speech of the principal speaker, succeeded in seriously holding up the meeting until at last they were roughly ejected, taken in charge by the police, and finally sentenced to a fine and imprisonment if it were not paid. They chose imprisonment. They were Christabel Pankhurst, Mrs. Pankhurst's daughter, and Annie Kenney, a young Lancashire mill girl whom the Pankhursts had discovered, converted, and adopted. At last the cause possessed its martyrs.

The militants continued their campaign throughout the entire Election. After its victory what would the Liberal Cabinet do? We must examine the difficulties which confronted them, if they wished to give the feminists any satisfaction.

10

The Government might adopt the plan put forward by Mill in 1867, and propose to give women the vote on the same terms as men possessed it under the existing franchise. This course presented the advantage that the reform would be extremely moderate. Only a small number of women would receive the vote, spinsters, widows, and married women who carried on some species of trade. 500,000 women it was estimated would be enfranchised,[1] as against a male electorate of over 7,000,000. And it would be extremely undemocratic. Almost all the new women voters would belong to the wealthier classes, and only a handful of working women would obtain the vote. Mill was prepared to accept this result. 'If only one woman in 20,000 used the suffrage, to be declared capable of it would be a boon to all women. Even that theoretical enfranchisement would remove a weight from the expansion of their faculties, the real mischief of which is much

[1] H. of C., February 3, 1897. Faithfull Begg's speech (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. xlv, p. 117).

greater than the apparent.'[1] But it was not acceptable to all the Liberal politicians. In the case of the boards of guardians, the school boards, and the county, district, and borough councils a reform on these lines might be tolerable. We have seen how little interest the country took in these elections. But it would be dangerous to extend it to parliamentary elections and when an important national decision was at stake to grant the vote to a minority of women suspected of Conservative sympathies. And the danger would be the greater because a considerable section of the Unionist opposition under the guidance of its most eminent leaders had declared in favour of women suffrage. The Liberal members of the House of Commons were indeed the readier to vote in favour of the principle because they knew that their leaders were divided on the question and its settlement remote.

Or another method might be chosen and women suffrage incorporated into a Bill effecting a general reform of the franchise. After the reform of 1884 only one more step remained to be taken and England would possess an unqualified system of universal suffrage. Why not enact that every adult Englishman should possess the vote but only a single vote and every Englishwoman as well? But how long must the women wait before such a reform could be effected? If the House of Commons and even the House of Lords was prepared at a stretch to take this final step on the road to universal suffrage by granting the vote to the minority of adult males which was still unenfranchised, it would be a long time before a majority could be found to risk a reform which by establishing universal suffrage for both sexes would more than double the electorate at a single stroke. To link the two questions of universal and women suffrage was, the feminists suspected, nothing more than a device for shelving the second question. In 1907 a motion in favour of women suffrage was, the Speaker reluctantly decided, 'blocked' by a previous motion in favour of adult suffrage for both sexes alike.[2] Had not the latter motion been deliberately introduced to prevent the discussion of the former? When a month earlier the annual congress of the Labour party wished to settle the question of women suffrage by passing a motion in favour of equal adult suffrage the chairman, Keir Hardie, a fanatical feminist, had threatened to resign from the

[1] H. of C., May 20, 1869 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Series, vol. clxxxvii, p. 824).
[2] H. of C., March 25, 1907 (ibid., 4th Ser., vol. clxxi, pp. 1525–1526).

party rather than associate himself with tactics which in his opinion were intended to postpone the issue.

II

After the Liberal victory at the polls the members of the different groups of women working for the suffrage, the National Union and the Social and Political Union, in spite of the serious difficulties in the way of common action demanded and obtained a joint interview with the new Premier. On May 19 Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman received the deputation at Downing Street and stated that he was personally in agreement with their claim, which he regarded as based upon 'conclusive and irrefutable' arguments. But he reminded them that on this subject his party and the Cabinet itself were divided and that they would have many difficulties to overcome. He concluded by giving them two pieces of advice: 'to go on pestering', and exercise 'the virtue of patience'. The suffragists followed the second and their patience was in fact put to a severe test. During the first two sessions of the Liberal Government they were obliged to be satisfied with two Acts passed simultaneously which permitted women to sit on County Councils and Borough Councils in England and on County Councils and Town Councils in Scotland.[1] And it was provided that if a woman were elected chairman of a County Council or mayor of a borough she could not exercise the functions of a justice of the peace which, had she been a man, would have been attached automatically to the office. The 'suffragettes' followed Sir Henry's first piece of advice and continued to 'pester'

[1] 7 Edw. 7, Cap. 33: An Act to amend the Law relating to the capacity of women to be elected and act as Members of County or Borough Councils (*Qualification of Women [County and Borough Councils] Act*, 1907). 7 Edw. 7, Cap. 48: An Act to amend the law relating to the capacity of women to be elected and act as Members of County or Town Councils in Scotland (*Qualification of Women County and Town Councils [Scotland] Act*, 1907). The same rights were extended to women in Ireland by 1 & 2 Geo. V, Cap. 35: An Act to enable women to be elected and act as Members of County and Borough Councils in Ireland (*Local Authorities [Ireland] Qualification of Women Act*, 1911). For the real unimportance of this reform see H. of L., May 5, 1914, speech by the Bishop of London: '. . . It is true that women have since 1907 been made eligible for County Councils, but as I have already pointed out, on so narrow a qualification that very few indeed can serve, and the number of women who are now administering our Education Act and giving a service which no one can contest is a valuable one has gone down to hundreds when it used to be thousands' (*Parliamentary Debates*, Lords 1914, 5th Series, vol. xvi, p. 52).

the Liberal statesmen by an unceasing series of demonstrations. And their anger increased when Campbell-Bannerman who was in favour of their cause was succeeded as Prime Minister by an opponent of women suffrage who had hardly entered on his new office when he took an opportunity to state his position. A Women's Enfranchisement Bill had just passed its second reading in the House of Commons.[1] Asquith stated that it would be impossible during the present session to provide the necessary time for its further discussion. The only prospect he held out was that before the dissolution of the Parliament elected in 1906—in other words, within the next four years, the Government would introduce a Bill to reform the male franchise and the supporters of women suffrage would be at liberty to propose whatever amendments they desired to give effect to their views.[2]

The women organized monster processions through the London streets which often mingled with the columns of unemployed. They besieged the Houses of Parliament, the government offices, the Ministers' private houses, lying in wait for prominent politicians, tormenting them with the monotonous repetition of their demands, haunting them with their presence. They never ceased harassing Liberal public meetings until Lloyd George, against whom their persecution was chiefly directed, announced his intention not to speak at meetings from which all women had not been excluded. They rose in the women's gallery of the House of Commons and interrupted the debates, whatever their subject, by screaming at the top of their voices 'Votes for Women'. One day two suffragettes chained themselves to the grille which enclosed the gallery and while they continued to bawl and hold up the debate workmen had to be summoned to remove the grille and the women with it. The women's gallery was then closed until the day not long afterwards when male feminists made the same scenes in the men's gallery which had in turn to be closed. The suffragettes exploited the weakness of their sex, its proneness to hysteria. The men were cowards if they allowed them to behave in this way, cowards if they used force to repress their disorders.

[1] H. of C., February 28, 1908. Stranger's motion (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxxv, pp. 212 sqq.).

[2] May 20, 1908. Reply to a deputation of 60 Liberal Members of Parliament, supporters of women suffrage also H. of C., May 28, 1908 reply to Alfred Hutton (ibid., vol. clxxxiv, p. 962).

A Public Meetings Bill[1] hastily passed by both Houses in December 1908 which provided special penalties for those who disturbed public meetings completely failed to achieve the purpose which the guardians of order should have kept in view. What they had to avoid as far as possible was the odium of imprisoning the suffragettes. An order was given to the metropolitan police to arrest them but release them before they were brought into court. They then adopted new tactics to force the authorities' hands. Assaults on policemen and breaking windows were typical offences which they committed in cold blood in order to get themselves imprisoned. They were duly imprisoned, went on hunger strike and by their violent struggles made forcible feeding impossible. Ill, almost at death's door, they were released. As soon as they had recovered their health, they committed a new outrage. What could be done with them except send them back to prison? But what purpose did it serve? A feminist of noble family, Lady Constance Lytton, was imprisoned but immediately sent to the infirmary on account of her ill health and soon released. She persuaded herself that she owed this leniency to her social position. She got herself arrested a second time under a false name and was subjected to the ordinary treatment, refused all nourishment and fell so seriously ill that though released she never recovered her health. A new chapter had opened in the history of feminism and its martyrs.

12

The picture we drew of the struggle between the two parties between 1909 and 1911 on the double question of Lloyd George's Budget and the restriction of the rights of the House of Lords was not therefore complete. We must also picture the Liberal party tormented without respite under the mocking gaze of their Unionist opponents by a swarm of buzzing and stinging gnats. The persecution was interrupted only by a brief truce of six months when on the accession of George V all parties agreed to allow the new monarch to make his first essays in sovereignty amidst a universal peace. A group of Members of Parliament formed a

[1] 8 Edw. 7, Cap. 66: An Act to prevent Disturbances of Public Meetings (*Public Meetings Act*, 1908). It had been introduced in the Commons by Lord Robert Cecil (H. of C., December 17, 19, 1908; *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. cxcviii, pp. 2168 sqq., 2328 sqq.).

committee which entitled itself the Conciliation Committee to draw up a Women's Enfranchisement Bill sufficiently moderate to reassure the Unionist supporters of women suffrage and sufficiently comprehensive to overcome the opposition of those Liberals who considered the Suffrage Bills hitherto presented too undemocratic. Stanger's Bill, which had been debated in the House of Commons in 1908, was open to the objection that it multiplied the grounds qualifying for a vote and therefore aggravated the abuse of the plural vote to the profit of the wealthy classes: as a property owner, lodger, university graduate, the rich woman could by arrangement with her husband secure two or three additional votes for the family. Moreover, the Bill permitted a married woman to claim a distinct vote when the rent paid for the domicile exceeded £20, another privilege for the wealthy. The Conciliation Bill introduced in June 1910 by a Labour member, Shackleton, was not open to these objections.

The franchise it proposed to give women would be based not on the complicated qualifications hitherto prescribed but simply on 'occupation' of a domicile. All women who were householders would possess the vote, all that is to say, who occupied a house or part of a house, even if it were only a single room, provided it was in their own name, or occupied a shop or office whose rental was not less than £10. Not many however would come under the latter category. Not more than 5 per cent, Shackleton estimated. In this way the danger, real or imaginary, on which the Liberals harped, of artificially multiplying votes to the benefit of the rich, would be avoided. Shackleton moreover considered that the number of women who would benefit by a measure of this description had been under-estimated. They would amount he maintained to about a million and he claimed that by methodical investigations it had been proved that 75 to 80 per cent of the women enfranchised would belong to the working class.[1]

The Bill passed its second reading on July 12 by 299 to 190 votes. Asquith had spoken against it, also Lloyd George and Churchill. The latter were not indeed intransigent opponents of women suffrage. At bottom Lloyd George was in favour of the reform. But they had been exasperated by the attacks of the suffragettes.

[1] H. of C., June 14, 1910. Shackleton's motion, and the passage of the first reading of the Bill. July 11–12 the Bill passes its second reading (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1911, 5th Series, vol. xvii, pp. 1202 sqq., vol. xiv, pp. 41 sqq.). For the character of the Bill see H. N. Brailsford, *Woman Suffrage. The Conciliation Bill. An Explanation and Defence*, 1910.

Lloyd George was the victim of an unremitting persecution. Churchill had been assaulted in the street by a fanatical suffragette armed with a whip. Moreover, Lloyd George's objection was not without foundation. While he was prepared to vote in favour of the principle of women suffrage, he wanted the Bill, which he regarded as insufficiently democratic, drawn up in such terms that it could be amended in course of debate and completed by clauses extending the franchise to all classes of men.[1] This was done by the Second Conciliation Bill introduced in the Commons on May 5, 1911, by Sir George Kemp, which passed its second reading by 255 to 88 votes. What would happen during the session of 1912? Lloyd George, speaking apparently in the name of the Government, promised the necessary time to debate the clauses and pass the third reading of the Bill. Asquith did not dissent but replying on November 9 to a deputation which waited on him to plead the cause of universal suffrage he promised a Bill to reform the franchise on the lines they desired into which the supporters of women suffrage would be allowed but not encouraged by the Government to introduce any amendments they could get the House to accept.

On March 28, 1912, the Conciliation Bill came up once more in the Commons. In the previous session it had been passed by a majority of 167. It was now defeated by a majority of fourteen, 222 to 208 votes. Is this change of front on the part of the majority to be explained by the exasperation aroused by the suffragettes' extravagant behaviour? Or was it rather due to the pressure which Asquith and his friends brought to bear on certain members of the Liberal majority, the Irish Nationalists in particular, to vote against the Bill or abstain from voting? In any case the way was now free for Asquith to introduce his general measure of franchise reform into which, indeed, a feminist amendment might, he said, be introduced though he was counting on the House of Commons not to stultify itself and by going back on its decision of March 28 commit what he termed a 'national mistake'. The Government's Franchise Bill which passed its second reading on July 12 by 290 to 218 votes came up for its third reading on January 24, 1913, at the end of an interminable session whose work, held up by the Irish question which now occupied the

[1] H. of C., July 12, 1910 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1910, 5th Series, vol. xix, p. 305).

front of the stage, had not been completed by December 31. The Government did not indeed propose to introduce universal suffrage. But by suppressing the plural vote and the representation of the universities, and by a radical alteration of the method by which the register was compiled, the Bill practically amounted to a universal suffrage Bill. It would moreover confer a more or less extensive franchise on women, if one or other of four amendments accepted by the Prime Minister were embodied in it. But at this juncture a dramatic blow fell. Some days before the debate opened Bonar Law, the Leader of the Opposition, had asked the Speaker, referring to a precedent of Parliamentary procedure, whether such a radical alteration of the Bill as amendments of this kind would involve was not unconstitutional. He had requested a few days in which 'to consider the question'.[1] On the 27th he decided in favour of Bonar Law's objection and refused to allow any of the amendments to be discussed. Asquith was obliged to drop the Bill. On the other hand, he could not bring it forward again with one of the feminist amendments embodied in the original text, for he himself and many others of his Cabinet and party were hostile to them. All he could do was to promise that if a Bill on similar lines to that which Sir George Kemp had introduced in May 1912 were again brought forward, the Government without sponsoring it would set apart as much time for its discussion as though it were a Government Bill. This was to return to the promise made by Lloyd George in 1911 which had resulted in the adverse vote of March 28, 1912. Always the same vicious circle.

13

Indignation in the feminist camp was at its height. For several years the moderates of the National Union had given their confidence to Asquith and his party. They now broke with the Liberals and decided to support the Labour party, the only one of the three which had made women suffrage a part of its official programme.

[1] H. of C., January 23, 1913 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1913, 5th Series, vol. xlvii, pp. 643 sqq.). Lord Ullswater's account (*A Speaker's Commentaries*, vol. i, pp. 136–7) is not quite accurate in as much as he gives us to understand that on the 22nd and 25th everything took place in private conversations between Bonar Law, Asquith and himself. The Tories had already raised the difficulty a year earlier but had admitted a few days later that it could be overcome. (E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, p. 371.)

The leaders of the party accepted their support without enthusiasm, for it condemned the party to an attitude of uncompromising hostility to the Liberals, which it had no desire to adopt. But the women had the money the party lacked and so profitable an alliance could not be refused. Throughout the country at by-elections Labour candidates came forward who secured the defeat of the Liberal candidate either to their own advantage or the advantage of the Conservative candidate. And the suffragettes who fought under the Pankhursts' banner redoubled the number and violence of their outrages.

Their agitation assumed new forms. Banished from the gallery of the House of Commons they turned their persecution against a more highly placed victim. In the theatre, at church, even at Buckingham Palace the King was roughly addressed by unknown women who rose to denounce him as 'Czar' and 'torturer'. Corrosives were placed in letter boxes to destroy the correspondence. Pictures were defaced in Museums. Buildings were set on fire whether they belonged to notorious opponents of feminism or were simply adjacent to a house where a Liberal meeting was being held. Shots were fired at trains. Then the suffragettes attacked churches, in which they placed bombs which did considerable damage. Two old country churches were burnt down.

Friends of law and order consoled themselves by the reflection that these extremists were injuring the cause they professed to serve. In 1913 and 1914 the only result achieved by the feminist agitation seemed to have been to torpedo the Government's Bill to extend the franchise. The Cabinet resigned itself to introducing, as in 1907, a Bill to abolish the plural vote which, twice thrown out by the House of Lords, was waiting for the session of 1915 to receive the royal assent without passing the Upper House. Meanwhile a Bill in favour of women suffrage was rejected by the Lords in 1914 after debates interesting indeed, but as academic as they could have been in the lifetime of Campbell-Bannerman.[1] Moreover, the Conservatives had the satisfaction of observing that the violent methods employed by the Social and Political Union were alarming an increasing number of its members. There had been a split in 1908 when Mrs. Despard founded a separate group, the Women's Freedom League. A more serious split

[1] H. of L., May 5, 6, 1914 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Lords 1914, 5th Series, vol. xvi, pp. 7 sqq., 66 sqq.).

occurred when in 1912 Mr. and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, a couple of feminists with Socialist sympathies, retired from the Union, withdrawing their paper, *The Common Cause*, from the influence of the extremists. And there was a further split in 1914 when Sylvia Pankhurst, the founder of the East End federation, broke with her mother and Christabel. But it could not be denied that those who remained were, like Gideon's soldiers, though fewer, more formidable.

What could be done? The Government hastily passed in April 1913 an Act which empowered the courts to order the discharge from prison of a woman whose health was endangered as the result of a hunger strike, subject to her reimprisonment without further trial when her health had been restored.[1] It became known as the cat and mouse Bill. Its authors hoped that the women after their first experience of prison and the hunger strike would shrink from a second. This was true of some but not of the majority or the more ardent. Mrs. Pankhurst, held responsible, as Chairman of the Social and Political Union, for one of the first cases of feminist incendiarism, had been sentenced to nine years' imprisonment and it was to prove that the sentence was intended to be a reality from which she could not escape by a fortnight's hunger strike that the cat and mouse Bill had been passed. But the only result was that for a whole year the mouse played with the cat rather than the cat with the mouse. Once more what was to be done? Pass a measure making all the subscribers to the Social and Political Union civilly liable for the damage committed? Could anyone believe that the prospect of trials by the hundred would act as a deterrent? Pass a Bill in one clause absolving the prison authorities from all responsibility for the lives of prisoners who refused to take nourishment? Was it certain that any of the prisoners would recoil from sacrificing her life? On Derby Day in 1913 they had seen a suffragette adopt a new form of propaganda by action, throw herself beneath the feet of the horses and die from the wounds received. In the case of Miss Davidson on Derby Day 1913 feminist fanaticism was still confined to voluntary martyrdom. But when the suffragettes placed a bomb in a church, set fire to a house or fired at a train in motion, though

[1] 3 Geo. 5, Cap. 4: An Act to provide for the Temporary Discharge of Prisoners whose further detention in prison is undesirable on account of the condition of their health. (*Prisons [Temporary Discharge for Ill Health] Act*, 1913.)

they took care that the church or house was empty, and the train a goods train, they were playing a dangerous game. Who could be certain that some zealot might not soon commit a murder? At the annual congress of the Union of Teachers in April 1914 when it refused to pass a motion in favour of women suffrage Miss Hewitt of East Ham declared amidst uproar that 'the power of tyranny' was 'tempered by assassination'.[1] A painful conflict was in process between British toleration and the fanaticism of the suffragettes. Not to have prevented the latter was a defeat for the former. And now what could be done to avoid further defeats? Yield and grant the franchise to women as though the methods employed by its supporters had been legal? That would be to capitulate to violence, to pay tribute to revolutionary fanaticism. Repel violence by violence. Even if successful would that be a victory? Would it not rather be a defeat, an admission that the Russian not the British methods of government were the right ones? Wait and by employing a minimum of repression attempt to exhaust by patience this strange frenzy, unprecedented in the history of modern England? Was it certain that it would be exhausted? The evil certainly showed no sign of diminution in July 1914. Never had acts of violence and incendiarism been more frequent.

III THE IRISH REVOLT

I

When the summer of 1914 opened, the threat of a general strike called by the Triple Alliance of the miners', railwaymen's, and transport workers' unions weighed on England. But the alarm felt was due to memory of the disorders which had occurred in 1911. For the moment the labour unrest was certainly less grave than it had been three years before. The suffragist agitation on the contrary was more irritating, more pestering than ever. But if it contributed to the general unrest, and if the changes of which it was apparently the symptom were perhaps the most profound which society was undergoing, these disorders were a source of embarrassment rather than a serious threat to the Government. It was in Ireland that the general anarchy was on the point of

[1] *The Times*, April 17, 1914.

degenerating, had indeed begun to degenerate, into civil war. To understand the origin of the crisis there is no need, as in the case of the feminist agitation, to delve into past history. For this was not an agitation which sprang suddenly upon the world of politics. How many times already had Irish history, while remaining obstinately apart from the current of English, hampered and poisoned the latter? We have already related the course of events to the day when the Liberal Government shortly before Campbell-Bannerman's death had been confronted on the one hand with the defeat of its Irish Council Bill, on the other with the failure at least partial of the attempt made by the late Unionist Government in 1903 to transfer gradually and peaceably the entire soil of Ireland to the native tenants.

During the years which followed, the Nationalist party remained faithful to its policy of alliance with the Liberals, awaiting a favourable opportunity to summon the latter to honour a long standing pledge and grant Home Rule to Ireland. We have told the story of the crisis which followed the rejection of Lloyd George's great Budget by the House of Lords and pointed out that the two General Elections of January and December 1910 had apparently made the Irish masters of the situation. When the session of 1912 opened, the Government was free to pass the Home Rule Bill through the House of Commons by the disciplined combination of Liberals, Labour members, and Nationalists and this once done could defy a House of Lords now rendered powerless. But to understand the details of the crisis which ensued we must discover what authority John Redmond and his party possessed in Ireland at a moment when their influence in the British Parliament was in the ascendant.

The first enemies with whom Redmond had to contend were the moderates led by William O'Brien who had helped Gerald Balfour and after him George Wyndham to pursue, while the Unionists were in office, their policy of 'devolution'. But O'Brien's party had been weakened by the invincible hostility the Ulster Protestants displayed towards the attempts at conciliation made by the Tory Cabinet and still further by the Liberal victory at the Election of 1906. Once more hopes were kindled in Ireland of concessions which would far exceed the offers made by certain English Conservatives and would not stop short of complete autonomy. It was in vain that O'Brien attempted to exploit

against Redmond the defeat of the Irish Council Bill and his acquiescence in the failure which had befallen the Land Act of 1903. Instead of accepting with an ill-concealed delight the defeat of a measure which he continued to defend warmly and persisting in its claims for immediate and complete Home Rule the Nationalists, he maintained, should have accepted the Irish Council Bill and in return have demanded that the English taxpayer should provide the funds necessary to bring back into operation the Land Act of 1903. As we have already seen he had been finally compelled to surrender to Redmond. But was the surrender unconditional? The terms of 'reconciliation' contained a clause, the second, which laid down that 'it was the duty of the Nationalist representatives of Ireland, while striving incessantly for Home Rule, to devote themselves earnestly to working for every measure of practical amelioration which it might be possible to obtain for her people from either English party, or from both,' and it could be interpreted as a concession to O'Brien's opportunism. The clause enumerated among the most urgent reforms, a settlement of the University question satisfactory to Catholics, measures to hasten the expropriation of the landlords, and a reduction of taxation. If Redmond and his followers, having torpedoed the Irish Council Bill, failed to obtain satisfaction on any of these points, it would be a proof that their method was the wrong one and O'Brien's more effective.

For the moment the third question did not come before Parliament. As we shall shortly see, its aspect had been completely changed by the passing of the important measures of social reform in 1908 and 1911. But this was not the case with the two former, particularly the University question, and it was a triumph for the reunited Nationalist party, a defeat therefore for O'Brien, when in 1908 the Government introduced a Bill calculated to give final satisfaction both to the Irish Protestants and the Irish Catholics. The question had first been tackled by Bryce, who had submitted it to the examination of a Committee of nine, which by a majority of six to three proposed to incorporate all the existing Irish colleges in a single University. It was a solution unacceptable either to Trinity College, the citadel of Protestantism in Dublin which was not prepared to surrender its independence, or to the Catholic Bishops who wanted a College of their own in the capital on an equal footing with the Protestant. The new Bill which Birrell

explained in the House of Commons on March 31, 1908, abolished the 'Royal University 'of Ireland, made the Belfast College which had formed part of it hitherto, a separate university, set up a new college in Dublin on an equality with Trinity and completely distinct from it, and incorporated this new college and the colleges of Cork and Galway into a single University. To receive State assistance these two new universities, Dublin and Belfast, must be undenominational. Nor could the State grant be employed to support a building where any form of worship would be carried on or any theological teaching given. But Trinity College was undenominational in theory and in practice Protestant. It was equally certain that the University of Belfast would be Presbyterian and the new Dublin University Catholic, both in the composition of its professorial staff and in the spirit of its teaching. The sole guarantee of religious neutrality contained in the Bill was a provision that the senates of the two universities, during the first few years at least, should be appointed by the Government. And the Government took care to appoint one Catholic among the thirty-five members of the Belfast Senate, seven Protestants among the thirty-six members of the Dublin Senate. The Irish Bishops had the wisdom to accept a compromise which gave them in substance what they wanted. In London Liberals and Unionists agreed in approving the Bill and in a few months the British Parliament rid itself of a problem which for many years had appeared insoluble.

2

The question of the Land Act was tackled at the same time.[1] It was impossible to postpone it any longer. The continuous fall in the value of consols made the Act of 1903 increasingly costly to operate both to the British Treasury and the Irish ratepayer. The Government at first adopted a circuitous route and its attitude appeared to show a determination not to modify but to reinforce the agrarian legislation begun in 1903. A phrase in the King's speech of January 1908, as interpreted by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Asquith, promised a measure to expedite the division of the pasture land into small holdings. The Congested Dis-

[1] For a bibliography see Book 1, p. 54 *n.*

tricts Acts had already dealt with the problem, but they were applicable only within narrow limits and were moreover permissive. The principle of compulsory purchase of the grazing land would be laid down. But almost immediately the Committee appointed to inquire into the working of the Land Act of 1903[1] reported and the report pointed out that the public finances demanded a complete remodelling of its provisions. The Committee proposed in substance that to pay for purchases already made which could not be undone a limited amount of Land Stock should continue to be issued, the landlord whose land was being purchased having the right to be paid in Land Stock at a rate of £92 for every nominal £100. For future purchase it proposed a new type of stock at 3 per cent, and since the 3 per cent was at par, it was hoped to avoid difficulties arising from an eventual depreciation in value. Moreover, to be on the safe side and make further provision against this risk the report recommended that the new shares should never be issued below par, and if it should become impossible to maintain this restriction, the landowner who wanted to sell should have the right to be paid in shares bearing 3 per cent interest on their face value. The bounty payable to the purchaser must also be reduced. This should be effected by establishing a sliding scale by which the cheaper the landlord sold, the higher the bounty he received. On the other hand, the annuities to be paid by the tenant purchaser must be raised from $3\frac{1}{4}$ to $3\frac{5}{8}$ per cent of the cost of purchase. A Bill was accordingly introduced by the Government in November. It contained a number of provisions giving effect to the Committee's recommendations[2] and others besides. The Treasury would be made responsible for the costs hitherto chargeable to the Irish ratepayers in virtue of a clause in the Act of 1903 whose application had caused such discontent. The relief thus given to the ratepayer was estimated at £7,000,000. The Bill further made the Congested Districts Board a body possessed of a legal personality, a 'corporation' invested with more extensive powers[3]

[1] *Irish Land Purchase Finance. Report of the Departmental Committee appointed to inquire into Irish Land Purchase Finance in Connection with the provision of Funds required for the Purposes of the Irish Land Act*, 1903, February 18, 1908.

[2] With certain modifications. For example the annuities payable by the purchasers were raised from $3\frac{1}{4}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ (not $3\frac{5}{8}$).

[3] For further details of these innovations which became law in 1909 see W. L. Micks, *An Account of the Constitution, Administration and Dissolution of the Congested Districts Board for Ireland from 1891 to 1923*, 1925, pp. 120 sqq.

and gave the Estates Commissioners the right to effect under certain definite conditions a compulsory purchase of land.

In November 1908 it was too late for the Bill to be debated seriously before the end of the autumn session. But it was reintroduced with hardly any alterations at the beginning of the following session. The two clauses which relieved the Irish ratepayer and established the principle of compulsory purchase enabled Redmond to support a measure which proclaimed the partial failure of that Act of 1903 of which he had been a hearty supporter. For John Dillon, who had always been hostile to the Act of 1903, the new Statute was a triumph. By accepting the Bill of 1903 Redmond had surrendered to O'Brien. By accepting the Bill of 1909 he surrendered to Dillon. The Bill passed after debates spread over considerable intervals and never heated.[1] The battle over Lloyd George's Budget had opened, attention was elsewhere. O'Brien however did not resign himself to the failure of a measure which he regarded as in a sense his own work. The Committee's report had scarcely been published when he called a meeting at Dublin of the parliamentary party to demand a mixed conference between representatives of the party and representatives of the landlords at which an attempt would be made to devise, in opposition to the Government's solution, a solution more favourable to Irish interests. Defeated by forty-two votes to fifteen he attempted to do alone what he had failed to do in collaboration with the entire parliamentary group, and called for on August 5, 1908, a large meeting of representatives of the tenants and the landlords, who appointed a joint deputation to lay before the English Government the grievances of those Irishmen who wished to maintain the essential provisions of the Land Act of 1903. The deputation obtained nothing. O'Brien was howled down at a National Convention held in Dublin on Feburary 9, 1909, and feeling himself irretrievably defeated he shortly afterwards resigned his membership of the party and of Parliament. But it was not long before he returned to his favourite strategy of setting up an organization in opposition to the Nationalists and he founded an All for Ireland League to oppose his old foundation, the United Irish League, of which Devlin had taken possession. He found a valuable helper in a leading business man of Dublin,

[1] 9 Edw. 7, Cap. 8: An Act to amend the Law relating to the Occupation and Ownership of Land in Ireland and for other purposes relating thereto (*Irish Land Act*, 1909).

W. M. Murphy, who had quarrelled with the Nationalist leaders and had founded in opposition to their *Freeman's Journal*, a rival paper, the *Irish Independent*, which had already become a serious rival to the former. He found another in Tim Healy, an inveterate schismatic, who after leading an ultra-Catholic group had for some years past been drawing closer to O'Brien's moderates. He denounced the bad faith of Dillon whom not without good reason he regarded as the author of the new policy pursued at present by the official party. If Dillon accepted the Land Act of 1909 it was not astonishing. Had he not always hated the Land Act of 1903? Had he not done his utmost in his county of Mayo to prevent it from being successfully worked?[1] With greater success O'Brien exploited against Redmond and Dillon the unpopularity of the 1909 Budget. Not only was Ireland, as we have seen, protectionist and on this point in agreement with the English Unionists, but the increase in the duty on spirits aroused strong opposition throughout the towns and country districts of Ireland. At the General Election he won an initial triumph by securing the return of eleven members in County Cork on his programme of political conciliation and economic reform.

According to O'Brien and his followers the most urgent reform was not political separation from Great Britain but the transformation of the rural proletariat into a population of small peasant holders and the Land Act of 1909 would, he contended, have the effect, perhaps designed by its authors, of bringing to a standstill the great movement of land purchase in process since 1903. Was his contention borne out by the facts? The statistics are not easy to interpret.[2] For in 1908 and 1909 when everyone expected a measure which would make land purchase less profitable to vendor and buyer alike there had been such a rush to purchase land on the terms laid down by the doomed Statute of 1903 that in any case a reaction during the next few years was inevitable; and it was certainly no small measure of success for the land purchase scheme that when the War broke out two-thirds of the arable land had already changed hands. In any case after this slight success at the Election of January 1910 O'Brien's influence steadily declined.

[1] Captain D. D. Sheeham, *Ireland since Parnell*, pp. 188–9.

[2] See the divergent conclusions reached by Erskine Childers, *The Framework of Home Rule*, p. 314. Justin Phillips, The New Peasant Ireland. 1. 'Land Purchase' (*The Irish Review*; *a monthly magazine of Irish Literature, Art, and Science*, February 1913, vol. ii, pp. 635 sqq.). *The Land Purchase Deadlock* (March 12, 1913; vol. iii, pp. 81 sqq.).

In a Parliament in which the Unionist and Liberal forces were evenly balanced the seventy-three official Nationalists were masters of the situation, the true victors of the Election and we have seen how during the ensuing months Redmond's authority steadily increased. He dominated the debates in the House of Commons, and brought about the failure of the joint Liberal and Unionist conference which for several months caused him serious anxiety. The December Election followed. O'Brien had hoped to win twenty seats. But he could put no more than twelve candidates in the field, among them an English Tariff Reformer, and kept only eight seats, all in the district of Cork. Throughout the United Kingdom the position of the parties remained unchanged. Redmond was still in a position to dictate his terms to the Cabinet. And the December Election had brought him the further gain of a formal undertaking by the Liberal and Labour members to introduce a Home Rule Bill in the new Parliament. The opposition of the House of Lords was no longer serious, since it was paralysed from the outset by the Parliament Bill passed in 1911. In 1913 the Government brought in a Land Bill which, if it had passed, would have given new vigour to the movement to expropriate the landlord. But it was a mere formality introduced at the close of the Session.[1] And though it was reintroduced in 1914, it was once more a formality. It was soon dropped.[2] Dillon continued his campaign against the policy of conciliation pursued by the followers of Lord Dunraven, Sir Horace Plunkett, and O'Brien,[3] and under his influence, favoured as it was by the situation, the official party succeeded in concentrating the entire attention of the masses in Ireland on the single question of Home Rule. The methods advocated by O'Brien and his friends were presented as out of date. There must be no longer any suggestion of going to Westminster cap in hand to beg the alms of a few immediate material benefits. The day was at hand when an independent Parliament in Dublin would deal with the land question as it pleased.

[1] H. of C., July 21, 1913 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1913, 5th Series, vol. lv, pp. 1722 sqq.).

[2] H. of C., July 20, 21, 22, 1914 (ibid., Commons 1914, vol. lxv, pp. 208, 261, 428).

[3] 'Some Phases of the Irish Question' (*Round Table*, March 1912, pp. 332 sqq. *Round Table*, June 1913, p. 509). Sidney Brooks 'Aspects of the Irish Question' (*Fortnightly Review*, November 1911; New Series, vol. xc, pp. 826 sqq.). See also the obituary notice of John Dillon in *The Times*, August 10, 1927.

3

To sum up: When in 1911 the battle between the two Houses ended, Redmond had nothing more to fear from O'Brien. But in another quarter the horizon was perhaps not so clear and dangers threatened which might one day prove serious. By his unyielding attitude on the question of Home Rule and his opposition to a policy of compromise Redmond, who, if he had ever been a revolutionary, was a revolutionary no longer, put himself at the mercy of the revolutionaries. It was all very well for him to promise that the Protestants would have nothing to suffer from Home Rule. He was the ally, indeed the leader, of all the Catholic zealots in Ireland.[1] And though he had been moulded by the civilizing influence of twenty years of Parliamentary life, the fact remained that he was identified with the United Irish League which Devlin had wrested from O'Brien and which as soon as the Land Act of 1909 had been passed had revived the campaign of agrarian outrages. If his policy were in the end defeated in the British Parliament, could he without losing his popularity at a stroke accept the defeat, even temporarily, now that the constitutional barrier to the passing of a Home Rule Bill had been removed? And if he did not accept it, on what grounds could he counsel prudence when the Irish called upon him to lead a revolutionary movement?

In fact, the policy of extreme courses never dead in Ireland was acquiring at this time fresh vigour. For the reasons mentioned above the year 1909 had been to a certain extent propitious to O'Brien and his following. In 1910 the situation was reversed and in the reaction against O'Brien's policy of moderation Redmond ran the risk of being himself outstripped and charged with being too moderate. The submission of the question of the House of Lords to a conference composed of Liberals and Unionists in equal numbers from which the Nationalists were excluded was calculated to alarm the latter. Then strange rumours got abroad of what was happening, if not at the conference itself, at least in its purlieus. Certain of its members, it was reported—Balfour was

[1] See Redmond's remarks in a conversation with Wilfred Scawen Blunt on February 13, 1910: 'In Ireland the defeat of the Government would be hailed with delight. There will be bonfires lit on every hill in Ireland. The alliance with the Liberals was very unpopular and the people wanted a fighting policy again for Home Rule.' (Wilfred Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries*, vol. ii, p. 301.)

mentioned on the Unionist side, Lloyd George on the Liberal—had been attracted by the idea of applying this method of a committee of conciliation which had just settled the problem of the unification of South Africa and might perhaps settle the conflict between the two Houses, to the problem of the relations between Great Britain and Ireland. Why should it not be examined by another conference of similar composition? Might it not be possible to devise by amicable negotiations a solution which would satisfy the desires of the Irish and the interests of the British people? The sessions of Parliament were congested by the constantly increasing number of questions whose settlement was urgent. Why not remedy the congestion by setting up subordinate Parliaments not only in Ireland but in Scotland, Wales, and England itself? When this Home Rule All Round was in operation the work of the Parliament of Westminster would be confined to matters which concerned the United Kingdom and the Empire as a whole, fiscal questions, foreign politics, the army and navy. A number of speeches delivered by Liberal politicians at public meetings suggested that they found this programme attractive. In July Birrell hinted at the possibility of incorporating Irish Home Rule in a wider scheme of imperial federation.[1] At this juncture a Scottish National Manifesto informed the public that a National Scottish party was in existence at least in embryo.[2] In his youth Lloyd George had been a Welsh Nationalist of a sort, and a speech he delivered in September showed that he had not changed his views.[3] Moreover in October the Conservative Press, as though in obedience to an order from headquarters, adopted a conciliatory attitude towards the Irish Nationalists.[4] And when Redmond who was travelling in the United States, in an interview which he gave on October 4 to the New York correspondent of the *Daily Express*, expressed himself in terms which could

[1] Speech at the Eighty Club, July 25, 1910: 'To drag Ireland in the wake of England was downright stupid policy. He believed that federation beginning here at home, as it was called, was ripening for rapid and speedy decision. Such a federation once established would be able to find room for our Dominions overseas as and when they wished to come in. We should then have a truly Imperial Parliament.'

[2] Speech at the Eighty Club, July 25, 1910. Cf. the Master of Ellibank's speech at Belfast, October 18, 1910. In 1913 a *Government of Scotland Bill* setting up in Scotland a system of Home Rule or of devolution at least passed the formality of a second reading in the House of Commons (H. of C., May 30, 1913; *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1913, 5th Series, vol. liii, pp. 471 sqq.).

[3] Speech at Cefnddwysarn Chapel, September 20, 1910.

[4] See in particular the *Observer*, October 16 and six articles in *The Times* signed Pacificus on 'The Constitutional Conference'. October 20, 22, 24, 28, 31 and November 2, 1910.

be interpreted only as an acceptance of the programme of Home Rule All Round[1] it looked for a moment as though the politicians of all parties were prepared to overrule popular passions and effect an amicable settlement of the question of Home Rule. But it was not long before these passions once more gained the upper hand.

The Ulster Unionists called upon their English confrères not to yield an inch[2] and the attitude of the Conservative Press towards the Irish question once more became adamant. On the opposite side Redmond was compelled by his party to disavow the words put into his mouth by the *Daily Express*.[3] His attitude, he declared, was the same as Parnell's had been. The programme of devolution was dead. He had no objection to raise if the imperial Parliament having granted Home Rule to Ireland, proceeded to extend it to Scotland, Wales and England but he refused to wait for Irish Home Rule until the distant day when it might adopt such a far-reaching solution. Possibly Redmond in 1910 as in 1907 adopted this uncompromising attitude against his personal inclination. The extremists took exception to a speech he delivered at Waterford on November 27 in which he asked for a Parliament 'elected by the Irish people, with an Executive responsible to it, and with full control over all purely Irish affairs'. Parnell, it is true, had accepted the formula, but it was no longer sufficient for men determined to take nothing less than an immediate grant of complete autonomy.

4

We might be tempted at first sight to regard Sinn Fein as the centre of this new extremist agitation.[4] This however would be to misconceive the character of the party. Sinn Fein which lacked, as it has always lacked, a great leader was a group of eccentric intel-

[1] *Daily Express*, October 5, 1910.

[2] Meeting of the Joint Committee of the Unionist Association of Ireland, Dublin, October 18, 1910.

[3] *Daily Express*, October 18, 19, 1910. We should observe however that in an article published at this very time in *MacClure's Magazine* of New York and *Nash's Magazine* of London (See below p. 541 *n.*) Redmond while claiming for Ireland the status of a dominion expressed his willingness to leave the customs in the control of the imperial Parliament.

[4] For this revival of extremism in Ireland see Captain H. B. C. Pollard late of the Staff of the Chief of Police, Ireland, *The Secret Societies of Ireland. Their Rise and Progress*, 1922. R. M. Henry, *The Evolution of Sinn Fein*, 1920, pp. 87 and 90. Captain D. H. Sheeham, *Ireland since Parnell*, 1921, pp. 253 sqq.

lectuals, who refused to commit themselves to any definite strategy. They did not object in principle to an armed rising but, since an insurrection had no chance of success, unless England were absorbed in the conduct of a war abroad, the question was for the moment of purely academic interest. The novel tactics which in 1906 and 1907 they had loudly and most unsuccessfully advertised were a kind of peaceful strike by which Ireland would organize her own public life and without violence withdraw from the operation of English law. They had however consistently maintained that if at any time the Nationalists should be once more, as in the days of Parnell, masters of the parliamentary situation and in a position therefore to compel the British Parliament to concede Home Rule they would have no objection to the employment of this constitutional method. But in 1910 these conditions seemed to have been fulfilled and Sinn Fein officially declared that until further notice they would put no obstacles in the way of Redmond and his followers. For three or four years therefore Sinn Fein was for all practical purposes non-existent.[1] When later on it re-emerged it was a Sinn Fein rejuvenated and transformed by the influence of an extremist movement which came into being about 1910 and had originally nothing in common with Sinn Fein. For though the latter had been founded at the centenary of the 1798 rebellion it was not a republican group. It merely refused to regard the Act of Union of 1800 as legal and demanded a return of the constitution of 1782. But that constitution had been neither republican nor democratic, and Griffith's 'Hungarian' policy was prepared to accept an English monarch and an Irish aristocracy. At the outset the Sinn Feiners regarded with disfavour the birth of a movement both republican and revolutionary.

The new movement was led by two groups. The first of these, purely republican, dated from the foundation in the autumn of 1910 of a paper appearing every two months called *Irish Freedom, Saoirseacht na' h-Eireann* which set out to make Sinn Fein republican by reviving the old Fenian party the Irish Republican Brotherhood. The latter, discredited by the acts of violence of which its members had been guilty, its alliance with Parnell, and condem-

[1] 'From 1910 to 1913 the Sinn Fein party was looked on as a negligible association of cranks' (Captain H. B. C. Pollard, *The Secret Societies of Ireland*, p. 118). 'From 1910 to 1913 the Sinn Fein movement was practically moribund' (W. A. Philipps, *The Revolution in Ireland, 1906–1923*, p. 88).

nation by the hierarchy, had finally joined Sinn Fein in 1906. It was as a revolt against what was already termed the old Sinn Fein that it sprang once more into life. Its heroes were Wolfe Tone[1] and Robert Emmet the leaders of the 1798 rebellion, its directing group was called the Wolfe Tone Club, and John Mitchel and John O'Leary the conspirators of 1860. The movement was undenominational. Its leaders proposed 'to substitute the common name of Irishmen for that of Catholic or Protestant'. The objective of the Brotherhood was an Irish Republic, its method, violent revolution. It therefore soon made common cause with the Irish Socialist party which had already been in existence for fourteen years.

We have already had occasion to speak of the foundation in 1896 of this party, at once republican and Socialist, by an exceptionally hard-headed Irishman, Connolly. We have also related how in this critical year 1910, Connolly returned from a lengthy sojourn in America, and brought back with him the principles novel to himself and other agitators of the United Kingdom which he had borrowed from the Industrial Workers of the World and the French Syndicalists. And we have seen how in the person of Larkin the Irish Socialist party obtained what the other political groups lacked, a leader who in his ascendancy over the masses resembled O'Connell and Parnell. But we perhaps laid undue emphasis on the opposition between its programme of social revolution and the programme of national emancipation pursued by Redmond and Devlin. It is true that it had the entire Nationalist Press against it, that Devlin attempted without very much success to organize 'sane' trade unions in opposition to the frenzy of Connolly's great union, that the bishops distrusted it and shortly declared open war against it.[2] But all this must not blind us to the fact that the leading opponent of Larkin and Connolly during the Dublin strikes was Murphy, an opportunist and friend of O'Brien, whom Redmond and Devlin regarded with little favour. Nor

[1] The nationalist R. Barry O'Brien published in 1903 a new edition of Wolfe Tone's autobiography which he prefaced by a glowing panegyric. 'The overthrow of established government is a serious affair. The man who attempts it must be judged not only by the intrinsic justice of his cause but by the practical character of his plans. . . . Was there hope of success? This is the first question.' The introduction concluded with the ambiguous words: 'We live in better times and brighter prospects still are dawning on us' (pp. xxix, xxx, xxxi). Did O'Brien mean that the times were better because violent methods were no longer necessary or because rebellion had now a likelihood of success?

[2] J. M. Hone, 'James Larkin and the Nationalist Party' (*Contemporary Review*, December 1913; vol. civ, pp. 784 sqq.).

must we forget that if Larkin and Connolly were hostile to Sinn Fein it was because in their opinion it was anti-Socialist, undemocratic, and even, since it was prepared to accept an English monarch, unpatriotic.[1] They wanted a violent revolution to free the Irish worker at a single blow from the yoke of capitalism and England.[2] Should circumstances ever arise in which an armed rising had any prospect of success, they alone would have the desperate courage to hazard it. They might indeed prove its victims and others reap the fruits. But they would at least be its agents and heroes.

5

We must now return from Dublin to London and attempt to discover from the public utterances of the political leaders on what points the British ministers were in agreement with the Nationalist leaders. When Redmond speaking in the House of Commons demanded a measure 'giving to the Irish people the legislative and executive control of all purely Irish affairs',[3] he was simply repeating almost verbally the terms of the pledge Campbell-Bannerman had given in November 1905 a few days before Edward VII invited him to form a government. Campbell-Bannerman had announced his intention of placing 'the effective management of Irish affairs in the hands of a representative Irish authority',[4] and Asquith on the eve of the Election of January 1910, while explicitly safeguarding the indestructible supremacy of the imperial Parliament, had pledged himself to set up in Ireland 'a system of full self-government in regard to purely Irish affairs'.[5] But in the speeches delivered by these three statesmen—even by Asquith in spite of the misgivings, which, as everyone

[1] See in the first number of Larkin's paper, *The Irish Worker and People's Advocate*, his judgment of Sinn Fein: 'A party or group which, while pretending to be Irish of the Irish insults the nation by trying to foist on it not only imported economics based on false principles, but which had the temerity to advocate the introduction of foreign capitalists into this sorely exploited country. Their chief appeal to the foreign capitalists was that they should have freedom to employ cheap Irish labour.' 'For eleven years these self-appointed prophets and seers have led their army up the hill and led them down again and would continue to so lead them, if allowed, until the leader was appointed King of Ireland under the Constitution of 1782.' (Quoted by R. M. Henry, *The Evolution of Sinn Fein*, p. 92.)

[2] James Connolly, *Labour in Irish History*, 1910. *The Reconquest of Ireland*, 1911 (collected in a single posthumous volume entitled, *Labour in Ireland*, 1917).

[3] H. of C., March 30, 1908 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxxxvii, p. 116).

[4] Speech at Stirling, November 23, 1905.

[5] Speech at the Albert Hall, December 10, 1909.

knew, he entertained in regard to Home Rule—another formula made its appearance calculated to encourage the Irish to entertain more ambitious hopes. In 1907 Campbell-Bannerman had promised the Irish, if he were in a position to carry out his intentions, the powers that 'every self-governing colony has'.[1] Redmond had seized hold of the formula. 'What you have done for Frenchmen in Quebec,' he had declared in the House of Commons in 1908, 'what you have done for Dutchmen in the Transvaal, you should now do for Irishmen in Ireland.'[2] And when in 1910 Asquith, repeating the language employed by Campbell-Bannerman in 1907, claimed for his Irish policy 'the sympathy of the overwhelming majority of the great Dominions overseas who have learned how easy it is to combine local autonomy with imperial loyalty',[3] he was no doubt encouraged by the fact that at this very time Redmond was employing the same language in an article he published in an American review.[4] 'We are not seeking', he declared, 'an alteration of the Constitution or of the Imperial Parliament. We are simply asking to be allowed to take our place in the ranks of those other parties to the British Empire —some twenty-eight of them—which are governed, so far as their purely local affairs are concerned, by free and representative institutions, which are their own.' It was an ambiguous formula, and the ambiguity was perhaps deliberate. It was not the same thing to ask for a Home Rule confined to 'purely local affairs' and an autonomy of the kind enjoyed by the dominions.

When the principal Colonies had successively obtained parliamentary self-government the Statutes by which this autonomy had been conferred maintained side by side with the Colonial

[1] H. of C., February 12, 1907 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 4th Series, vol. clxix, p. 85). The serious implications of the formula did not escape the opposition which protested against it next day by the mouth of W. Long a former Irish Secretary under the Unionist Cabinet (ibid., vol. clxix, pp. 186–7).

[2] H. of C., March 30, 1908 (ibid., vol. clxxxvii, p. 133). Cf. his conversation with Barry O'Brien: 'I should like to know what Englishmen mean exactly when they ask: "What do the Irish want?" We have told them again and again—an Irish Parliament and an Irish Executive for the management of Irish affairs. Englishmen ought to know what a Parliament means; though from the questions which they ask us, one might suppose that the idea was quite new to them. They have their own Parliament; and there are the Parliaments of their Colonies and Dependencies—the Australian Commonwealth, New Zealand, The Cape, Canada, the Transvaal, and so forth. An English statesman has plenty of examples to study in framing a constitution for Ireland.' (Barry O'Brien, *Dublin Castle and the Irish People*, 1909, p. 415. Cf. pp. 416, 418, 420.)

[3] Speech at Hull, November 25, 1910.

[4] 'What Ireland Wants' (*MacClure's Magazine*, October 1910), vol. xxxv, p. 691. The entire article was reprinted in England in the Christmas number of *Nash's Magazine*.

ministers responsible to the local parliament a Governor appointed by the British Government and responsible to it. The Governor possessed the right to veto on the instructions of the British Cabinet, itself obedient to the wishes of the British Parliament, measures passed by the parliament of the Colony. But no Governor-General has attempted to make use of this right. A free-trade England had not even prevented the Colonies from placing duties on the importation of foreign and even of British products. Indeed, so far as the Australian Colonies were concerned it had formally sanctioned the system by an express enactment.[1] Nor had London ever attempted to compel the Colonies to contribute to the military and naval expenditure of the Empire. It was almost as a beggar that the Government of the mother country had asked them without very great success for voluntary assistance. No one in England dreamt of granting Ireland such a measure of freedom. If, however, there was no question of effecting between Great Britain and Ireland such a separation as had been made between the United Kingdom and a Self-Governing Dominion, was England prepared to establish a federal relation between the two countries, defined as strictly as the relations between Quebec and Ontario in the Canadian federation, or New South Wales and Victoria in the Commonwealth of Australia?[2] The logic of such a step involved that universal Home Rule which, as we have already seen at the close of 1910, suggested itself to several statesmen as a compromise. Short of this there were only such makeshifts as had been embodied in the Bills of 1885 and 1893. The former had proposed to set up in Dublin a legislature sovereign within a restricted sphere while reserving all questions which concerned the Empire as a whole to a Westminster Parliament in which the Irish by a glaring anomaly would not be represented. The latter envisaged two distinct classes of members in the Westminster Parliament. One of these, elected by the constituencies of Great Britain, would have the right to deal with all questions which did not exclusively concern Ireland, the other fewer in numbers than the Irish representatives under the Act of Union would have the right to deal with all questions which did not

[1] 36 Vict., Cap. 22: An Act to amend the Law with respect to Customs Duties in the Australian Colonies (*Australian Colonies Duties Act*, 1873).

[2] 'Local powers should be given similar to those enjoyed by the Provinces of Canada' (Sir Edward Grey, election address, December 1910). Frederick S. Oliver, *What Federation is Not*, 1912, p. 81.

exclusively concern England, Wales, and Scotland. The Irish Nationalists would have nothing to do with a universalized Home Rule which would reduce them to the position of a small-subject nation, forming part of the United Kingdom on the same footing as Wales. But they were prepared to accept without too meticulous a scrutiny of detail any solution which, explicitly or implicitly repealing the Union, left open the future concession, sooner or later, of an independence for which the imprudent formula of Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith permitted them to hope, similar to that possessed by Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.[1]

6

The Government of Ireland Bill introduced on April 11, 1912, gave Ireland a Parliament. It would consist of two Chambers. There would be a Senate of forty members nominated for eight years, in the first instance by the Imperial Government, afterwards by the Irish. And there would be a Lower House of 164 members to be elected *on the existing franchise* in the proportion of one member for every 27,000 inhabitants, a franchise which the Irish Parliament might, if it chose, modify later. The financial powers of the Upper House would be limited like those of the House of Lords since 1911. In contra-distinction to the English procedure the members of either house would have the right to speak in the other. Disagreements between the two Houses would be settled by a joint session. The Lord-Lieutenant would give the royal assent to Bills passed by the Irish legislature, and would have the

[1] For the extension of the Dominion status to Ireland see Erskine Childers, *The Framework of Home Rule*, 1911 especially chap. x, pp. 188 sqq. *The Form and Purpose of Home Rule*, 1912, p. 25. The Home Rulers' present tactics were to exploit Imperialist sentiment. Erskine Childers, *The Framework of Home Rule*, 1911, pp. 144–5: 'Unionism for Ireland is anti-Imperialist. Its upholders strenuously opposed colonial autonomy and but yesterday were passionately opposing South African autonomy. To-day colonial autonomy is an axiom. But Ireland is a measure of the depth of these convictions. There could be no Empire to idealize if their Irish principles had been applied just a little longer to any of their oversea States which constitute the Self-Governing Colonies of to-day.' T. M. Kettle, *The Open Secret of Ireland with an Introduction by J. E. Redmond*, 1912, p. 120. 'The inevitableness of Home Rule resides in the fact that it is, as one might say, a biped among ideas. It marches to triumph on two feet, an Irish and an Imperial foot. If there were in Ireland no demand whatever for self-government it would nevertheless be necessary in the interest of the Empire to force it on her.' On the other hand, there is an excellent account of the difficulties which the Unionists discovered in the practical application of these formulas in A. V. Dicey's book, *A Fool's Paradise. Being a Constitutionalist's Criticism of the Home Rule Bill of 1912*, 1913.

right to withhold his assent for whatever period he thought fit. On the whole it was a constitution of the colonial type. But the powers of the Irish Parliament were made subject to special restrictions.

They concerned religion in the first place. The Irish Parliament was forbidden to establish any denomination or make financial grants to it, or favour or penalize anyone for his religious beliefs. The recent promulgation by the Vatican of the *Ne Temere* decree which rendered mixed marriages more difficult by pronouncing invalid marriages contracted by a Catholic without the presence of a priest had caused widespread irritation among Protestants and the Bill therefore provided that the Irish Parliament should have no power to render the validity of a marriage dependent on the faith of the parties or the performance of a religious ceremony. Of greater importance were the provisions which defined the relationship between the Irish and Imperial Parliament in such a way as to secure the permanent and sovereign interests of the Empire. The Irish Parliament would possess no competence in questions regarding the succession to the throne, foreign politics, imperial defence, the grant of peerages and other honours, coinage or weights and measures. Moreover, the Imperial Parliament reserved to itself the control of certain branches of the Irish administration itself; provisionally and for six years only control of the constabulary; as a temporary measure also, though the Irish Parliament could not demand its transfer until ten years had elapsed, the administration of the measures of social reform recently passed by the British Parliament, the collection of taxes, and legislation dealing with savings banks and friendly societies. And land purchase was permanently reserved. The mention of these latter reservations has brought us to the problem of the financial relations between Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom.

The problem was always a delicate one but its aspect had changed of recent years. In the past Ireland could justly complain that she was exploited by England. This was the case no longer. The heavy burden of the new taxes just imposed by the Imperial Parliament fell on the wealthy and Ireland being a poor country escaped it. Moreover these taxes had been imposed to defray not only military expenditure but also the cost of social services by which Ireland benefited very considerably though she had not even expressed a desire for them. Old Age Pensions, Labour

Exchanges, National Insurance; Ireland, a rural and backward country, would never have thought of asking for such services if she had not been drawn into the orbit of her great industrial neighbour.[1] Official statistics proved that during the financial year 1910–11 Ireland paid taxes to the value of £10,350,000, and received in administrative services of every description £12,400,000.[2] The Bill therefore set up a complicated financial system to be in force only so long as the Irish deficit continued. The total amount of taxes levied in Ireland, together with a further sum which beginning at £500,000 would decrease annually until at the expiration of six years it would be fixed at £200,000, would be paid into 'the Irish Exchequer'. Whatever deficit there might be would be borne by the Imperial Treasury. It was hoped that it would become progressively less. The expenditure on the police, at present exorbitant, would diminish when the country had been pacified by Home Rule. Old age pensions would become fewer as the population continued to decline. And the cost of land purchase, if for some time to come it must continue to increase, would finally be extinguished altogether when the transfer had been completed. On the other hand, the yield from taxation would become higher if the economic position of the country improved and if the Dublin Parliament imposed additional taxation, as the Bill permitted, provided no new tariffs were imposed. When at last the Irish Budget was balanced another system would be adopted.[3]

7

Since the powers of the new Dublin Parliament were thus restricted Ireland, unlike the Colonies, must be given representation at Westminster. The Bill provided for forty-two Irish mem-

[1] Stephen Gwynn, *John Redmond's Last Years*, 1919.

[2] *Irish Finance. Report by the Committee on Irish Finance*, 1912, p. 24.

[3] Among the champions of Home Rule were a number of heretics who denied that in 1911 Ireland profited financially from her union with Great Britain (John J. Hogan, *Home Rule. A Critical Consideration*, 1911, pp. 54 sqq.), and others who, while admitting the financial advantages of the union, maintained that Ireland should be prepared to sacrifice them to secure financial independence. T. M. Kettle (*Home Rule Finance. An Experiment in Justice*) 1911: he even proposed that Ireland should make a contribution to the Empire, p. 71. Erskine Childers, *The Framework of Home Rule. A Lecture delivered at a Public Meeting Convened by the Young Ireland Branch of the United Irish League at the Mansion House, Dublin, on March 2nd, 1912*, pp. 23–4. But the system proposed was too generous to be welcome to the official Nationalist party. See Stephen Gwynn, *The Case for Home Rule Stated by*, with a preface by John Redmond, 3rd Edition, 1917. Preface.

bers of the Imperial Parliament. But the difficulties which we have just mentioned arose at once and the Bill made no provision for dealing with them. Asquith, it is true, in the speech in which he introduced the Bill promised a system of Home Rule All Round but it would be postponed to a later date and it was unpopular with the Irish. Moreover, the financial provisions of the Bill precisely because they were so generous—for an indefinite period Ireland would live on alms from England—placed severer restrictions on Ireland than were placed on any Self-Governing Colony: she was expressly forbidden to impose a tariff. The Unionists had therefore some reason to hope that Irish opinion would prove refractory and compel Redmond and his followers to break their alliance with the English Liberals. If they cherished any such expectations they were speedily undeceived. The Bill, like its predecessors of 1886 and 1893, gave Ireland a separate legislature. Moreover, names count for a good deal and Asquith conceded to the new Irish legislature what Gladstone had obstinately refused—the title of Parliament. When the Convention of the Nationalist party met in Dublin on April 24 it gave the Government Bill its unqualified and enthusiastic support. The meeting had been cleverly staged by Redmond and Devlin. The resolution was seconded by the Lord Mayor of Cork, who had just been elected to succeed an O'Brienite. A second resolution expressing the confidence of the assembly that the official party would introduce the necessary amendments into the Bill was seconded by a Protestant clergyman. And a Gladstone, a grandson of the great statesman, came from England to greet amid enthusiastic applause the dawn of the new era.

The debates in Parliament were prolonged until the end of the year. Once, in November, a Unionist amendment to the financial clauses of the Bill was adopted, and the Unionists exploited their victory for all it was worth. But they were well aware that it was a mere accident due to a poor attendance of the Liberal and Labour members. It was followed by an adjournment which gave time for angry passions to calm down and the damage was repaired a week later after violent debates.[1]

A few alterations were made in the Bill by the Government itself, of which one at least was important. After the expiration of

[1] H. of C., November 11, 12, 13, 1912 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1912; 5th Series, vol. xliii, pp. 1765 sqq., 1841–1842, 1993 sqq.).

five years the Senate would not be nominated by the executive but would consist of members elected in a fixed proportion for each of the four Irish provinces, a system of proportional representation being adopted to secure the representation throughout the country of racial and religious minorities—the Catholic minority in the north, the Protestant in the south. The Bill finally passed its third reading on January 16, 1913, by a majority of 110 votes. Eleven days later the House of Lords threw it out without debating its clauses by 326 to 96 votes.

If the debates had been lengthy they had not been passionate. On the contrary, interest had flagged, and the attendance of the public had often been scanty. Other and more pressing matters engaged the attention of Parliament and the nation. The iron machinery of the 'closure', peculiar to the British Parliament, discouraged all attempts at obstruction. Devised thirty years earlier to overcome the obstruction of the Irish members it now enabled the Irish Nationalists to crush the opposition of the English Unionists. And the Parliament Bill, employed this year for the first time, deprived the debates of much of their interest. For only urgent questions arouse strong passions. And the question at issue was not whether Dublin would or would not have its Parliament within a year. Nor would a decision be reached when the House of Lords rejected the Government of Ireland Bill. There would not even be an appeal to the electorate to decide the conflict between the two Houses. The House of Commons which passed the Bill of 1912 was sovereign but its sovereignty could not be made effective for a long while to come. It was the first act of a drama whose catastrophe lay two years ahead.

The session of 1913 did not begin until March, since the extraordinary session of 1912 had extended far into the following year. During the session of 1912 two Bills had been passed by the Lower, and thrown out by the Upper House—the Irish Bill and the Welsh Church Bill. A third, the Franchise Bill, had been provisionally dropped, hung up by the feminist difficulty before the Commons had even debated its clauses. In its place a more modest measure was introduced abolishing the plural vote. But this Bill was a year behind the others and if the House of Lords rejected it twice could not pass until 1915, provided no General Election were held in the interval. The Cabinet quickly passed the other Bills thrown out by the Lords through their second reading in

the Commons and asked Parliament to sanction a special procedure for the third reading. Normally, the third reading of a Bill involved the individual discussion of its clauses. Such a discussion however would serve no purpose, since to fulfil the provisions of the Parliament Act the Bill must be returned to the Lords identical in every detail with the measure sent up the year before. The Cabinet therefore proposed that at the third as at the second reading both Bills should be passed *en bloc* after a cursory debate which must not exceed, particularly in the case of the Irish Bill, the limits of a single sitting. Asquith further pointed out that the Parliament Bill did not prevent the House of Lords from amending the Bill, or the Government from accepting its amendments. Clause two of the Parliament Act allowed the Opposition, even in the Commons, to suggest amendments which the Government might pronounce acceptable and which, if accepted in turn by the House of Lords might serve as the basis of a compromise.[1] But the Unionist Opposition, hostile to any compromise, refused to put any 'suggestions' forward and the Bill was passed *en bloc* by the Commons, rejected *en bloc* by the Lords. The debates were dreary, drearier even than in the previous year. This was the effect of the system set up by the Parliament Act of 1911. The second session of a Parliament had become a mere formality, an indispensable interlude between the first in which a genuine discussion took place, though the effects were too remote to make it interesting to the public, and the third, when a decision of the legislature already two years old, would be carried into effect and the will of the Lords overridden.

This final stage had been reached when Parliament reassembled for the new session in January 1914. The Cabinet after the Bill had

[1] 1 & 2 Geo. 5, Cap. 13, Sec. 2(4): '. . . Provided that the House of Commons may, if they think fit on the passage of such a Bill through the House in the second or third Session, suggest any further amendment without inserting the amendment in the Bill, and any such suggested amendments shall be considered by the House of Lords, and, if agreed to by that House, shall be treated as amendments made by the House of Lords and agreed to by the House of Commons. . . . ' To complete our account of the applications of the *Parliament Act* we may observe that it could also be employed *in terrorem*, to induce the House of Lords to accept a compromise without the need of recourse to the 'suggestions' for which the Bill made provision. This happened this very year 1913 in the case of a *Temperance (Scotland) Bill* which during the previous session had been mutilated by the amendments of the Upper House. The Government had announced its intention to drop the Bill, reintroduce it in the original form and pass it in this form in 1914 under the provisions of the *Parliament Act* if the House of Lords persisted in its attitude. The Bill was then passed a second time by the Commons but when it reached the Lords the latter restricted their amendments to those accepted by the Government and the dispute was settled by the compromise.

been passed for the third time by the Commons would possess the legal authority to disestablish the Welsh Church and give Ireland a Parliament. But was its legal matched by a corresponding moral and material authority? Brought suddenly face to face with facts after two years of unreal debate, it was obvious that the Cabinet, so far at least as Ireland was concerned, had no confidence in its own strength.

8

It was not that the Ministry need fear a revolt of British public opinion on the question. No doubt the Liberal party lost a certain number of seats. But in these cases the Unionist candidate owed his return to a split vote between the Liberal and Labour candidates.[1] The discontent which the National Insurance Act aroused in the working classes when it came into operation for the first time explains these Labour candidatures put forward to exclude the Liberal candidate. And the feminists financed them to further their cause. Labour headquarters gave a passive consent though not without anxiety at the prospect of a breach with the Cabinet which formed no part of its policy. The predominant feeling of the general public was boredom. The Liberals, besides the important measures actually introduced, promised universal suffrage and a reform of the law of real estate. They spoke also of an education Act and nationalization of the railways. But they aroused no enthusiasm. The Unionists promised conscription, protection, and the restoration of the rights of the House of Lords—not a popular programme. As regards the Irish question, opposition to Home Rule was still the fundamental plank of a party which for that very reason called itself 'Unionist'. But the Irish peril was no longer, as in 1886 and in 1895, an alarm which aroused the masses. Everyone was weary of a tedious problem, sickened by the dreary prospect that it might prove insoluble, and ready to welcome any solution a statesman might have the good fortune to discover. If ill-humour bulked largely in the attitude of the public towards political questions, there was also a large measure of indifference. There was a nonchalance encouraged by the

[1] Midlothian, September 10, 1912; Newmarket, May 16, 1913; Reading, November 8, 1913; South-West Bethnal Green, February 19, 1914; Leith, February 26, 1914 (the seat had been held uninterruptedly by a Liberal since 1832); North-East Derbyshire, May 20, 1914; Ipswich, May 23, 1914. Cf. Lloyd George speech at Criccieth, June 2, 1914.

continuous economic prosperity and the rapid increase of wealth in every branch of industry and commerce. And in consequence there was much moral anarchy, a spate of luxury and pleasure seeking. There was much social and political anarchy also. Labour seethed with unrest; the suffragettes raised their shrill war cries, and Ulster rebelled in advance against the Government of Ireland Act.

For it was in Ireland that the great, indeed well-nigh insurmountable, obstacle arose to the execution of this Statute accepted by the electorate of Great Britain. A quarter of its population—one million in four—was Protestant, and these million Protestants, determined not to endure the yoke of the majority, were not scattered uniformly over the island. In Munster and Connaught they were an insignificant minority, and in Leinster one in four. But in Ulster the situation was very different. In the west, in Donegal and in the south, in the counties of Cavan and Monaghan, the Catholics constituted five-sixths of the population; nearer the centre in Fermanagh and Tyrone they were only a little more than half and in the north in Londonderry,[1] and in the south-east in Armagh the Protestants were in a majority and their majority became overwhelming in the east, in Antrim, Down, and the city of Belfast. The Ulster Protestants worked hard and amassed wealth in their shipyards and linen factories. The firm of Harland and Wolff was the greatest firm of shipbuilders in the world. It had built the giant liners, the *Olympic* and the *Titanic*. It was the boast of the population of Ulster, or rather of its industrial districts, that they paid three-quarters of the Irish taxation. Proud of the example their hard-working community afforded to the rest of Ireland they were determined never to amalgamate with the race of babblers and merry-Andrews whose follies and vices the new school of Irish literature delighted, it would seem, to depict as though in defiance, a spectacle for the respectable Protestants of the north.

In September 1911, little more than a month after the House of Lords finally passed the Parliament Bill, Ulster was the scene of a vast popular demonstration which united Irish enthusiasm and Protestant gravity. 300,000 Irish Unionists assembled to express their thanks to Sir Edward Carson, an eminent barrister

[1] Where however the city of Londonderry itself returned a Home Ruler in 1912, giving the Home Rulers a majority of one vote in the representation of Ulster.

who had become the accredited leader of their party and at the same time to give him and his friends a commission to draw up a constitution for a 'provisional government' of Ulster, to come into operation the very day 'a Home Rule Bill of any description' became law. From that moment demonstrations of revolt against the Irish Government which the English Liberals proposed to set up in Dublin followed thick and fast. In January 1912 30,000 men marched past Sir Edward. In April 1912 at Balmoral near Belfast 100,000 men marched past Bonar Law, the official leader of the Unionists in the Commons, the son of a Presbyterian minister, and an Ulsterman by birth who on his return to England encouraged the Ulstermen by using, first at a public meeting, then in Parliament, the language of civil war.[1] Finally, a summer marked in Northern Ireland by perpetual brawls between Protestants and Catholics was concluded on the 28th of September by a solemn ceremony at Belfast. After a religious service the demonstrators formed a procession. It was headed by Sir Edward Carson, the Cromwell of the new movement. After him was borne an old banner of yellow silk embroidered with a red star in the centre and Saint George's cross in one corner, reverently preserved in an Ulster family and believed to have been carried two centuries earlier in the battle of the Boyne. Behind Sir Edward and his banner there followed an army of prospective rebels against the application of the Parliament Bill to Ireland. Then came Lord Londonderry, Lord Charles Beresford, and F. E. Smith, followed by a second army. The procession debouched on a public square. At a table set up for the purpose the demonstrators, 2,000 in number, were the first to sign what was called in Biblical language, the Covenant, a pledge taken in the presence of God to stand by each other 'in defending for ourselves and our children, our cherished position of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom, and in using all means which may be found necessary to defeat the setting up of a Home Rule

[1] Speech at Blenheim, July 27, 1912: 'Ireland was two nations. . . . The Ulster people would submit to no ascendancy, and he could imagine no length of resistance to which they might go in which they would not be supported by the overwhelming majority of the British people.' Also H. of C., July 31, 1912: 'In regard to what I said at Blenheim, I am very glad to have an opportunity of repeating it here. . . . I said the same thing in August a year ago. . . . I recognize . . . the difference and the great difference, between saying it when I was practically a private member and saying it as a leader of the Unionist party in this House. I have felt for months that sooner or later it would be necessary for me to say the same thing in the clearest and most explicit way.' (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1912; 5th Series, vol. xli, pp. 2132–2133.)

Parliament in Ireland', and if they could not prevent its establishment never to recognize its authority.

The agitation redoubled in 1913 when it became clear that the Government intended to carry out its programme and would not, as some Unionists had maintained, evade the issue by dissolving Parliament before the Commons had passed the Government of Ireland Bill for the third time. In July, when the dismal session of 1913 was drawing to its close a monster demonstration of Carson's followers at Craigavon in Ulster, in which 150,000 men took part, inaugurated enlistments for the army of 'Ulster volunteers'. Before the end of the year 100,000 had enlisted.[1] On September 17 the Ulster volunteers were placed under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir George Lloyd Reilly Richardson and on the 27th all the organs of a prospective provisional government were constituted. There was an executive committee of seventy-six members; a military council; an Ulster Volunteer Committee; a Legal Committee; a Customs, Excise, and Post Office Committee. At the same time a public subscription was opened to raise a sum of £10,000,000 to provide pensions for the volunteers or their their families if they were wounded or killed in the course of the armed struggle so likely to occur in the near future.[2] But the leaders seem, at any rate at this period, to have regarded the collection of the fund as a diplomatic move rather than a genuine insurance against casualties actually expected. They defied the British Government to repress a movement which though in form a rebellion was in fact a Loyalist movement since it was directed against those Irish Catholics who had always adopted

[1] It was only at this juncture that the British public learnt of the constitution of this army of Ulstermen. But in a country where rebellion seemed everybody's natural vocation Ulster had long been preparing to arm. In his *Annals of an Active Life* (vol. i, pp. 172–3) General Macready mentions a manifesto of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland dated December 7, 1910, which, while urging the voters to go to the polls at the next election, calls upon the Irish loyalists to prepare to fight in the event of a Home Rule Bill being passed and adds 'Already steps are being taken to enrol men to meet any emergency.'

[2] Sir Edward Carson's speech at Belfast, September 20, 1912: 'I only want to say "Good Bye". I shall be longing for the time when I can come back, whether the occasion be for peace—I prefer it—or to fight, and if it be to fight I shall not shrink. One thing I feel perfectly confident of is that to-day we have taken a step which has put our enemies into such a state of difficulty that they are wondering what on earth they are going to do.' And his language at Belfast on November 4, 1913, was even more explicit: 'He had never had riots in his mind at all. All day he had cautioned their people not to risk their lives or liberties in fruitless action. What they meant was steady, unflinching, determined and continuous obstruction of the law so as to make government under Home Rule absolutely impossible.'

the attitude of rebels and whom the English had always regarded in that light.

9

And in fact the Cabinet began to find its parliamentary triumphs a source of embarrassment. What use should it make of the third victory in 1914, which nothing could prevent? Already, a year before, when the Home Rule Bill was first passed, Lord Dunraven and the small Irish party in favour of a policy of devolution had intervened and a member of the Cabinet, Winston Churchill, when sketching a scheme of federalism for Great Britain which divided the country into as many as twelve separate regions had let it be understood that he might be contemplating a similar division of Ireland which would safeguard the autonomy of Protestant Ulster.[1] In 1913 during the long parliamentary recess which extended until January attempts at conciliation became more insistent.

Lord Loreburn, a former Lord Chancellor, addressed a letter to *The Times* on September 11 in which to prevent a civil war in Ireland he urged 'that there should be a Conference or direct communication between the leaders'. On October 8 Churchill expressed his desire for what he called a settlement by consent or by agreement and pointed out that if only the parties concerned could be brought to agree, the text of the Parliament Act enabled 'far reaching' amendments to be made in the Government of Ireland Bill.[2] And Asquith himself on October 25 while rejecting the suggestion of a formal 'conference' proposed an 'interchange of views . . . for the adjustment of the position of the minority in Ireland'.[3] What was the 'adjustment' he had in mind? Was it Home Rule for Ulster within Irish Home Rule? Sir Edward Grey speaking at Berwick on October 27 seemed to favour that solution. That Ulster should be permitted to claim exclusion from a Home Rule Ireland either immediately or when sufficient time had elapsed to prove co-operation impossible? Sir Horace Plunkett suggested a plan of this kind. Or should Ulster, or more strictly speaking its Protestant portion, be excluded for a fixed term of

[1] Speech at Dundee, September 12, 1912.
[2] Speech at Dundee, October 8, 1913.
[3] Address at Ladybank to the East Fife Liberal Association.

years, to be incorporated only at a later date when it would have had time to become accustomed to the new conditions? *The Times* in November declared that this was in fact the plan favoured by the Government. At this juncture conversations were held between the leaders of the two great parties, Asquith and Bonar Law. No result was reached. Two proclamations issued on December 4 forbidding, the first the importation, the second the transport along the coast, of arms and munitions, seemed intended to recall men's minds to a sense of realities. It was in vain that the speech from the throne on February 10, 1914, after admitting the failure of the conversations held the previous November, insisted on the dangers which threatened the country if the problem were not handled 'in a spirit of mutual concession'. Very few traces of such a spirit were visible in Ireland. It was proposed to liberate a nation and there were two nations, one of which refused liberation. In Ireland the passions of the herd, the more embittered because they were religious as well as political, clashed and the very suggestion of a compromise was absurd. Policy was confronted with fanaticism, and parliamentary methods, official and unofficial alike, were faced by the stark reality of an incipient civil war.

Asquith, however, decided to put forward a compromise on his own initiative, since Bonar Law rejected the suggestion. On March 9 he explained his views to the House. He did not propose to employ, as he had thought of doing in 1913, the method of 'suggestions' for which Clause 2 of the Parliament Bill made provision. But simultaneously with the introduction for the third time of the Government of Ireland Bill, which must be passed without amendment to satisfy the conditions of the Parliament Act, he would introduce an Amending Bill which passed by both Houses would modify the Home Rule Bill as though its provisions had been incorporated as amendments in the latter. The Bill would enable each of the Ulster Counties to decide by a plebiscite in favour of exclusion for six years from the operation of the Government of Ireland Bill. At the end of the six years these counties would automatically be incorporated into a self-governing Ireland. This procedure would satisfy the Irish Nationalists who would concede to their adversaries nothing more than six years' respite. But it would also satisfy the Unionists. If, as was generally expected, Parliament were dissolved in the autumn,

two General Elections would be held before the six years had elapsed. The Unionists therefore would have two opportunities of appealing to the country, and if the country gave them a mandate to do so, of settling the Irish question on a different basis. Possibly there were ministers who faced with a secret satisfaction the prospect of defeat at the next Election. The Government of Ireland Bill once passed they would be glad to see the Irish Nationalists confronted with a Unionist Government. But for this very reason perhaps the proposal did not attract the Unionist leaders. Moreover, it was confronted by the uncompromising attitude of the Ulster Protestants who were not prepared to abandon the rest of Ireland to the Catholics, unless the latter accepted the final, and not merely the temporary, exclusion of Protestant Ulster. While using conciliary language they demanded further concessions.

10

For a moment it seemed as though the Cabinet did not object in principle to this solution. From the time when at the close of 1910 he had appeared to entertain the hope of an amicable settlement of the Irish question, Lloyd George had maintained a deliberate silence. It was only at this juncture that he intervened once more. It was he who secured the assent of Redmond and his followers to the temporary exclusion of Protestant Ulster. He now again approached Redmond, Devlin, Dillon, and T. P. O'Connor and tried to obtain a further concession. They, however, refused. They had gone as far as they could without destroying their reputation as Irish patriots. Then the Cabinet decided to brave the opposition of Ulster. On March 14 Churchill spoke at Bradford words which seemed irrevocable. 'There are worse things than bloodshed. . . . We are not going to have the realm of Britain sunk to the condition of the Republic of Mexico.' On Monday, March 16, the Prime Minister in more Asquithian terminology made it plain that no further concessions would be made. And the Secretary for War, Seely, who had succeeded Lord Haldane when the latter was made Lord Chancellor in 1912, worked out in collaboration with Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, what was nothing less than a plan of campaign in

Northern Ireland. The army would occupy all munition dumps and arsenals, and all strategic positions in Protestant Ulster. A small flotilla would be in readiness to transport by sea regiments which the railways would refuse to carry. A formidable concentration of troops would presumably nip any attempt at rebellion in the bud. If, however, Ulster replied to the military occupation by an actual revolt, the leaders would be arrested and the insurrection forcibly put down. It was indeed expected that certain officers of Ulster origin would find it difficult to obey the orders they would receive. Those officers therefore, whose principles would be outraged by the repression of the revolt and who could not be relied upon to employ the necessary severity, were invited to resign their commissions.[1] General Gough, who was in command of the Third Cavalry Brigade at the camp in the Curragh in Ireland, resigned and was immediately replaced. This happened on Friday, the 20th. The following day, Lloyd George speaking at Huddersfield used even stronger language than Churchill had employed. 'We are confronted', he declared, 'with the gravest issue raised in this country since the days of the Stuarts. Representative government in this land is at stake. . . . I am here this afternoon on behalf of the British Government to say this to you—that they mean to confront this defiance of popular liberties with a most resolute, unwavering determination, whatever the hazard may be.'

But General Gough was not the only officer at the Curragh who resigned on March 20. With a few exceptions all the officers of both cavalry regiments resigned with him. Against the rebellion of Ulster the army could be used, but what could be done if the army went on strike? Carson informed the King that the Cabinet proposed to arrest himself and the other Ulster leaders, and that if this step were taken, all the customs houses in Ulster would be seized in retaliation.[2] The King urged caution on Asquith, who gladly accepted his advice. The Prime Minister in the Commons, the Lord Chancellor in the Lords, denied the intention attributed to the Government of undertaking a military

[1] For the text of the instructions given on December 16, 1913, to the generals in command of the forces in England, Scotland, and Ireland by the Secretary for War, Seely, see Major-General The Rt. Hon. J. E. B. Seely, *Adventure*, pp. 160–1.

[2] Lieutenant-Colonel A'Court Repington, *The First World War, 1914–1918*, vol. i, p. 69: he repeats Carson's account of the matter in a conversation with himself on November 19, 1915.

campaign against Ulster. General Gough was summoned to London, withdrew his resignation and returned to Ireland bearing a written pledge signed by the Secretary for War that the army would under no circumstances be called upon to repress by force a movement of resistance to Home Rule. When the report of this surrender was triumphantly proclaimed by the Unionist Press, the Premier denied that the promise had been made or at least had received the assent of the Cabinet. Then the Secretary for War resigned. In reply, the Chief of Staff, Sir John French, resigned. The Secretary for War withdrew his resignation, then resigned a second time. What an example for the British proletariat! Speaking in the House of Commons J. H. Thomas declared that if the negotiations then in progress between the railwaymen and the companies failed and a strike broke out in November he would bear in mind the lesson taught by the events in Ulster and advise the men to arm.[1] Under these circumstances Asquith with a courage universally applauded, yielded to his colleagues' entreaties and took over the functions of Secretary for War. As expert Parliamentarian, taking Seely's place, he made a desperate attempt to preserve the semblance of discipline in the army, while as Prime Minister he did his utmost to preserve the semblance of legal government in the State.[2]

Ulster had won the first round. A month later it gained a further and even more striking victory. When in December a royal proclamation forbade the importation of arms into Ireland, the Ulstermen had replied that it came too late since they already possessed all the arms they needed. They had proceeded to argue in the courts, not always unsuccessfully, that the proclamation was illegal, since the Liberal Cabinet had repealed the Crimes Act. At the end of April they proved that it was in any case ineffective. In the course of a single night to the mystification of the police and customs officials 40,000 rifles and 1,000,000 cartridges were landed at three separate points on the west coast and immediately distributed throughout Ulster. Where did this mysterious vessel, which under a false name brought the arms and munitions, come

[1] H. of C., March 23, 1914 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 1914, 5th Series, vol. lx, pp. 80–1) also H. of L., same date. (ibid., Lords 1914, 5th Series, vol. xv, p. 639.)

[2] For the Curragh episode see Major-General The Rt. Hon. J. E. B. Seely, *Adventure*, pp. 166 sqq. General Macready, *Annals of an Active Life*, vol. i, pp. 176 sqq. Major-General Sir C. E. Callwell, *Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson*, vol. i, pp. 139 sqq. Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson, *From Private to Field-Marshal*, 1921, pp. 193–5. J. A. Spender and C. Asquith, *Life of Lord Oxford and Asquith*, vol. ii, pp. 44–6.

from? It came from Hamburg and the rifles were Mausers.[1] Far from being ashamed of this German aid these rebels, self-styled loyalists, blazoned the fact with a lack of restraint which shows how intensely Irish their temper was. They were delighted when a prominent German diplomat, Secretary to the German Embassy in London, Baron von Kühlmann, made a lengthy visit to Ulster[2] and a host of German journalists flocked to the scene to keep their public in touch with the incipient revolution. If England betrayed them, why should not William II prove another William of Orange, come like the former from the Continent to deliver them from the Catholic yoke?[3]

II

To this further manifestation of anarchy the Government replied at first by adopting a still more conciliatory attitude. Lloyd George had disappeared from the scene. He was absorbed in piloting through the House of Commons an ambitious and complicated Budget which imposed extremely heavy taxation and

[1] 'There was reason to think that the German Government had stopped the traffic in the Kiel Canal in order to let the *Fanny*, the steamer which carried them, get round Denmark into the North Sea and so escape the vigilance of the British Navy' (Richard Burdon Haldane, *An Autobiography*, p. 269).

[2] Captain Sheeham, *Ireland since Parnell*, pp. 273–4.

[3] James Chambers, M.P., speech at South Belfast, May 23, 1913: 'As regards the future, what if the day should come when Ireland would be clamouring for independence complete and thorough from Great Britain? . . . What side would they take then? (A voice "Germany".) He bound no man to his opinions. They owed to England allegiance, loyalty, gratitude; but if England cast them off, then he reserved the right, as a betrayed man, to say "I shall act as I have a right to act. I shall sing no longer God save the King" ' . . . He said there solemnly that the day England cast him off and despised his loyalty and allegiance, that day he would say: 'England, I will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh' (*The Complete Grammar of Anarchy. By Members of the War Cabinet and their Friends* compiled by J. J. Hogan, 1919, p. 37). An utterance by Captain Craig, M.P.: 'Germany and the German Emperor would be preferred to the rule of John Redmond, Patrick Ford, and the Molly Maguires' (L. G. Redmond Howard, *Sir Roger Casement. A Character Sketch without Prejudice*, 1916, p. 30). Major F. Crawford speech at Bangor, April 29, 1912: 'If they were put out of the Union . . . he would infinitely prefer to change his allegiance right over to the Emperor of Germany or anyone else who had got a proper and stable government.' (D. Gwynn, *Life and Death of Sir Roger Casement*, p. 181.) It was more serious to find Bonar Law in open Parliament bestowing on this wild talk the semi-official sanction of the Unionist party: 'It is a fact which I do not think anyone who knows anything about Ireland will deny, that these people in the North and East of Ireland, from old prejudices perhaps more than from anything else, from the whole of their past history, would prefer, I believe, to accept the government of a foreign country rather than submit to be governed by hon. gentlemen below the gangway' (H. of C., January 1, 1913; *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1912; 5th Series, vol. lxvi, p. 464).

was the object of violent attacks.[1] But Churchill spoke in Parliament the language of peace with which Asquith associated himself. And on the other side of the House, Bonar Law and Sir Edward Carson himself made proof of considerable moderation. Unfortunately, the leaders on both sides always found themselves faced with the uncompromising obstinacy of the two factions, or rather, the two nations in Ireland. When on June 23 Lord Crewe introduced in the Lords the Amending Bill promised by Asquith at the beginning of March it was found to contain nothing more than the Prime Minister had indicated in his original sketch and which the Ulstermen and their allies had from the beginning refused to accept. Lord Crewe was content to mention incidentally that the Government were ready to consider certain amendments. The House of Lords replied by introducing into the Bill a series of amendments which changed its nature completely. Not only did they exclude Ulster without a plebiscite, *en bloc*, not county by county, finally, and not merely for six years but they modified the arrangements made by the Cabinet for the government of Catholic Ireland. The supporters of the Government in the Lords accepted this declaration of war passively and in silence. It was always the same impasse. If a Bill satisfied the Irish Catholics, the Irish Protestants would rebel against it. If a Bill was acceptable to Protestant Ulster and her English supporters, the Cabinet could not accept it without betraying its Irish clients. In despair, Asquith turned to the King.

The firebrands of the Unionist party had persistently pressed the King to intervene. They urged him to refuse his assent to the Bill when Asquith submitted it for his signature, or to dismiss immediately the Liberal ministers, form a Unionist Cabinet, and appeal to the country.[2] What did the King himself think? On the question of Ireland his personal opinions were those of the Unionist

[1] This is not the place to discuss the details of a Budget which Lloyd George carried only in part. We need only say that it exceeded the sum of £200,000,000, and presented a deficit and moreover that to provide for the increasing deficit of local government finance Lloyd George proposed to increase the contributions from the national exchequer to the local authorities in the spirit of that system of taxation of land values of which he never lost sight and that to make up the national deficit he proposed besides a considerable decrease in the sinking fund and an all-round increase of the taxes levied on large fortunes. Finally, the Speaker intervened to protest against the inclusion in a Money Bill of clauses not of a strictly financial character. For the difficulties in which Lloyd George was in consequence involved see Book 1, p. 349.

[2] For these demands see Sir John Mariott's reflections, *The Mechanism of the Modern State—a Treatise on the Science and Art of Government*, 1927, vol. i, p. 33.

party. Nor did he consider himself obliged to give his assent to the Government of Ireland Bill if it were not accompanied by the Amending Bill which the Liberal Prime Minister had himself admitted to be necessary.[1] But we can well believe that he shrank from taking so dangerous an initiative and forcing an appeal to the electorate after which it would be no longer as had been the case four years earlier the veto of the House of Lords, but the veto of the Crown itself which would be called in question.[2] It was because he was afraid to commit himself that during the last few months he had, though reluctantly,[3] come forward as a mediator. It was he who had approached Asquith and Bonar Law in November. It was he who in March acted as an intermediary between Carson and Asquith. Why should he not intervene again at the eleventh hour and attempt to secure, in accordance with the procedure which had suggested itself to Balfour and Lloyd George in 1910, and which Lord Loreburn had recommended in 1913, the appointment of an 'impartial' conference? When the Amending Bill reached the report stage—that is to say, when the measure as a whole must be put to the vote, an adroit use of the rules of procedure enabled Lord Dunraven to introduce and carry an amendment empowering the King to suspend by order in council the operation of the Home Rule Bill until a Royal Commission had reported on the constitutional relations between Ireland and the other parts of the United Kingdom.[4] Lord Morley opposed the amendment which he denounced as unconstitutional and it was carried in opposition to the Government. Nevertheless, Lord Dunraven was simply expressing, possibly in an unacceptable form, a desire to gain time, which the Government shared and which a few days later it would satisfy by another method. On Monday, July 20, after a week of feverish negotiations the

[1] Sir Almeric Fitzroy, *Memoirs*, June 16, 1914. Lord Morley's account of an audience with King George (vol. ii, p. 552).

[2] Christopher Addison, *Politics from Within, 1911–1918*, vol. i, pp. 34–6.

[3] Mensdorff Dispatch from London, October 10, 1913: 'King George is so preoccupied with the present difficulties of the domestic situation—that is to say, with Ireland and the responsibility laid upon the crown by both parties that he seems at the moment to give less attention to questions of foreign policy. His Majesty repeatedly complained to me of the extremely delicate position in which he was placed and the decisions he was called upon to take. No English sovereign, he said, had been confronted with such difficult problems. Fortunately he seems determined to maintain a strictly constitutional attitude and to resist the constant invitations made to him by members of the Opposition to intervene personally in the conflict' (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. vii, p. 430).

[4] H. of L., July 11, 1914 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Lords 1914, 5th Series, vol. xvi, pp. 1135 sqq.).

King summoned a conference of which the Speaker was chairman. It consisted of eight members: two Liberals, Asquith and Lloyd George; two Unionists, Lord Lansdowne and Bonar Law; two Irish Nationalists, Redmond and Dillon; and two Ulstermen, Carson and Captain Craig. The Labour party and the Liberal Press loudly denounced the Prime Minister's weakness and protested against a procedure which might be interpreted as an encroachment by the Crown upon the prerogatives of Parliament. Arthur Ponsonby raised the question in the House of Commons.[1] 'Republicanism', declared Ramsay MacDonald,[2] 'is at a discount in this country, but, if by the advice of responsible ministers or irresponsible court hangers-on the King is going to do something against the House of Commons' liberty, then the flames of Republican agitation will be lit at once.' But this doctrinaire opposition was indubitably artificial. It was obvious that the King in concert with his ministers was making a supreme effort not to assert his authority but to escape the necessity of using it, not to destroy the British system of parliamentary government but to save its imperilled tradition. The effort proved fruitless. The Conference held four meetings and the fourth, on Friday the 24th, ended in an impasse. The question of the treatment to be given to the two southern counties of Ireland, Fermanagh, and Tyrone where the Catholics were in a majority and the slight Protestant minority and the slight Catholic majority were so intermingled that it was impossible to separate them, was the point which the rival fanaticisms, each determined not to compromise with its opponent, chose on which to declare agreement impossible.[3] What then was the goal for which Ireland and England were heading?[4] Two days later another incident of civil warfare took place in Ireland more serious than any which had occurred in the previous spring.

[1] H. of C., July 22, 1914 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1914, 5th Series, vol. lxv, p. 454).

[2] Durham Miners' Annual Gala, July 25, 1914.

[3] For interesting details of the discussion on this question see Lord Ullswater, *A Speaker's Commentaries*, vol. i, pp. 163–4.

[4] General Macready, *Annals of an Active Life*, vol. i, pp. 193–4: 'On the 21st of July, 1914, the abortive conference took place at Buckingham Palace, and on the 24th of July I received a note from Mr. Asquith directing me to proceed to Belfast at once. There was to be no change from the former policy, troops were to 'sit tight' and make no moves of any kind. If a Provisional Government was proclaimed the consequential proclamation by Carson would be awaited to enable the Cabinet to determine their next move. A more thoroughly unsatisfactory position for any soldier it is hard to imagine, but the open support of the Conservatives by certain senior officers on the active list of the Army made it

12

The scene of the incident to which we allude was not Protestant but Catholic Ireland, the neighbourhood not of Belfast but of Dublin and to understand the events which led up to it we must go back a little. In telling the story of these last months of crisis we have said very little of the part played by Redmond, for the reason that it had been very subordinate. He had accepted the Government's Bill without reservation and obtained for it the support of his entire party. That support had ensured the passage of the Bill in three successive sessions. Redmond thus found himself as against the Ulster malcontents the representative of British constitutionalism and since thirty years of Parliamentary life had perhaps destroyed in him the revolutionary temper, he was delighted that under his leadership Catholic Ireland seemed to represent the forces of order against the forces of disorder. His position became more difficult when the Cabinet on the point of reintroducing the Government of Ireland Bill for the third time began to hesitate in face of the resistance of Ulster and to speak of compromise. In the teeth of many uncompromising utterances he capitulated for the first time in March when he accepted the Amending Bill as sketched by Asquith. He capitulated a second time in July when together with Dillon he consented to take part in a conference whose purpose could only be to explore the possibility of further concessions. But how difficult his position in Ireland had become! It is indeed surprising that he succeeded so long in maintaining his authority almost unimpaired. For at his back and without his recognition Catholic Ireland was following a year later the example set by Ulster and was arming.

The movement seems to have originated among Larkin's followers during the great strike in Dublin in the autumn of 1913. This host of workers mobilized for the strike provided the material of a genuine revolutionary army on the Ulster model, at once national and socialist, which would attempt to set up by

imperative in my view to see the business through no matter where it might lead.' To what extent the difficulties with which the Government was confronted were increased by the fear of alienating American opinion it is hard to decide in the entire absence of any reference to the subject either in the Press or in Parliament. It is however certain that the question must have caused the Cabinet considerable anxiety when it became clear that war with Germany was imminent. See *Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland 1916, Minutes of Evidence*, p. 21: Evidence by the Rt. Hon. Augustine Birrell.

force an Irish proletarian republic.[1] A Citizen Army was actually organized under the patronage of an English crank, Captain White, son of one of the leading British generals who after following for some years his father's profession had conceived an antipathy to war and the army and had dabbled one after another in all the Utopias, Tolstoyan, Vegetarian, and Communist before his conversion to the cause of the Irish revolution. On October 25 we find him on the platform of a large public meeting held in Dublin where a more ambitious project was discussed—nothing less than the formation of a huge army of volunteers which, irrespective of social, political, and religious creed, would prepare to defend the independence of Ireland. Representatives of Irish republicanism and Sinn Fein took part in the meeting, and the Hibernians and the United Irish League were also represented though their representation was smaller.[2] Sir Roger Casement was also present.[3] A Protestant born in Ulster but of English parentage, he had for some time been in the consular service and had taken part in Africa in Morel's campaign against the companies exploiting the Belgian Congo. From Africa he had proceeded to South America, where his denunciation of the inhuman treatment of native labour by the planters in certain districts of Brazil had attracted the attention of the British public and earned him a Knighthood. He had finally quitted the consular service under circumstances about which his enemies circulated damaging reports and had become a champion of Irish independence. In a series of articles which he wrote or inspired for publication in the *Irish Review* he advocated an alliance between Ireland and Germany in the event of the imminent and inevitable war between England and the latter country. A German victory, he maintained,

[1] 'We see to-day two main kinds of collective revolt, that of subject races and subject classes. They may be (indeed generally are) quite distinct. A class may revolt against the pressure of a social system, although the race of which it forms part has evolved that system as part of its character and culture. Or a race may revolt without formulating any distinct class protest. The race revolt is an affair of the surface consciousness, concerned with the modification or reconstruction of external conditions. Where the two revolts unite in one the whole National Being is engaged.' (Captain White, *The Significance of Sinn Fein*, 1918.) Quoted by the writer himself on page 246 of a work entitled *Misfit* in which he tells the story of his inconsistent and incongruous career. See further for the history of the Citizen Army P. O. Catharaigh, *The Story of the Irish Citizen Army*, 1919.

[2] W. A. Phillips, *The Revolution in Ireland*, 1923, pp. 68–9. D. D. Sheeham, *Ireland since Parnell*, 1921, p. 279.

[3] L. G. Redmond Howard, *Sir Roger Casement. A Character Sketch without Prejudice*, 1916. Denis R. Gwynn, *The Life and Death of Roger Casement*, 1930. Casement's writings were collected and published at Munich in 1917 under the title *Gesammelte Schriften*.

would mean for Ireland complete independence or at the least independence under a German protectorate.[1]

The organization of the Irish Volunteers inspired by Casement made rapid progress. By December their numbers were 1,850. At the beginning of the following June there were more than 100,000 volunteers with 630 training centres. The movement was governed from Dublin and was under the despotic control of a Committee of twenty-five in which the representatives of the parliamentary party were an insignificant minority. It was an organization likely to have proved dangerous to the Nationalists if it remained in the hands of extremists anxious to destroy the authority of Redmond and his followers. In fact, it achieved such rapid progress during the summer of 1914 because in May Redmond ordered his party to join *en masse*, and on June 12 in an open letter Redmond called upon the twenty-five members of the Committee to co-opt twenty-five others, nominees of the party. In case of refusal he demanded the immediate formation in every county of committees to reorganize the volunteers on a new basis independently of the Dublin Committee. Of the twenty-five members of the Committee eight refused to yield. But the remaining seventeen accepted Redmond's conditions. It was in vain that the Republicans and Sinn Feiners who were beginning to join the movement and the Socialists of the little Citizen Army which had not amalgamated with the main body of volunteers, denounced the servility of the Dublin Committee. Redmond was taking control of a movement which had been organized without him and undoubtedly, in the intention of many of its founders, against him.[2]

[1] Batha Macrainn 'Ireland and the German Menace' (*Irish Review*, September 1912, vol. ii, pp. 343 sqq.). '*Shan Van Vocht*'—'Ireland, Germany and the next War' (*Irish Review*, July 1913, vol. iii, pp. 217 sqq.). Denis R. Gwynn (*The Life and Death of Roger Casement*, p. 194) ascribes the latter article to Casement. In the first number of *The Irish Volunteer*, April 7, 1914, Casement published an article entitled 'From Clontarf to Berlin' in which he advocated: 1. A review of the National Volunteers to be held on April 23 the ninth centenary of the great national victory of Clontarf; 2. The participation of Ireland as a separate nation in the Olympic Games to be held at Berlin in 1916. 'Ireland should there be ranked among the free countries of the world. She will be at least as free as Finland or Alsace.' When the ships of the Cunard Line ceased to call at Queenstown, the German Hamburg-Amerika Line decided to take its place. But the Irish prepared to welcome the arrival of the first liner with celebrations on so ambitious a scale that the Foreign Office took alarm and at its request the German Government asked the Hamburg-Amerika Line to abandon its intention.

[2] S. Gwynn, *John Redmond's Last Years*, 1919, p. 116. Cf. on the Irish Volunteers, *Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland*, 1916, *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 45, Colonel Sir Neville Chamberlain's Evidence.

But the malcontents were to have their revenge. At first the Irish volunteers confined themselves to manœuvres and unarmed parades, or if they carried any arms they were wooden rifles. In July they decided to imitate Ulster and obtain arms from the quarters where the Ulstermen had obtained theirs, in Germany. A council of war was held in London at the house of Mrs. J. R. Green, the widow of an eminent English historian and an ardent Home Ruler. The meeting was attended by a young Englishman, Erskine Childers, a member of the spiritual family to which White and Casement belonged. A zealous patriot, he had fought in the Boer War and published the diary recording his life in the army. He had achieved success with a story about spying which called the attention of the British public to the danger of a German invasion, and had published studies of military tactics in which he discussed the lessons taught by the South African War as to the employment of cavalry. During the summer of 1910, spent with an Irish uncle, he was suddenly converted to Home Rule—in virtue of his British patriotism, he declared, and because he was an imperialist. Ireland must be treated as Canada had been treated in 1840 and South Africa a few years before and reconciled by complete liberation. His new creed led him to extreme courses. He collected and provided from his private means a portion of the funds necessary to purchase 25,000 German rifles. He commanded the yacht which took delivery of them in the neighbourhood of Hamburg and on July 26, 1914, two days after the failure of the conference, cast anchor with his cargo in the little port of Howth at the entrance to the harbour which led up to the capital.[1]

The Dublin volunteers were on the spot, prepared for a bold demonstration. They would unload the arms in broad daylight at the very gates of the city beneath the eyes of the powerless authorities. They occupied the pier, drove away the police and customs officers, kept whatever guns they required, piled the rest into motor lorries which disappeared from the scene, and set out on their return to Dublin, where they intended to make a martial and triumphant entry. They were met *en route* by a Scottish regiment which had been called out and which if it could not seize their arms, at least put them to flight. But when the Scotch

[1] For Erskine Childers see *Erskine Childers, 1870–1922. A Sketch* (by Basil Williams). For the Howth incident see Denis Gwynn. *The Life and Death of Roger Casement*, 1930, pp. 233 sqq. Conor O'Brien, *From Three Yachts. A Cruiser's Outlook*, pp. 1 sqq.

troops returned to Dublin they were greeted by the booing and missiles of an immense crowd. Alarmed and overwrought they fired. There were fifty casualties, among them three deaths.[1]

A loud cry of wrath arose throughout Catholic Ireland. This was the way in which the British Government, so long-suffering towards the Ulster rebels, met with shooting the first attempt of the genuine Irish to reply to the Ulster threat. But we cannot help asking whether the revolutionaries when they united their protests with the popular outcry were wholly sincere. For this bloody affray was a strategical success for themselves. Redmond was in a tight corner. He must either be the accomplice of a government of murderers or become in spite of himself the leader of an insurrection. The problem would in fact assume this form ere long, but meanwhile at the very moment when civil war seemed to have broken out in Ireland, Irish affairs became no more than an almost negligible episode in the tremendous struggle which was beginning and would array in mortal combat the nations and races of the globe.

[1] *Report of the Royal Commission into the Circumstances connected with the Landing of Arms at Howth on 26th July, 1914 and Minutes of Evidence with Appendices and Index, 1914.*

CHAPTER II

International Anarchy

I THE WEST AND THE PROBLEM OF ARMED PEACE

1

WE have already seen the effect produced in the West by the conclusion on November 4, 1911, of the agreement between France and Germany on the question of Morocco. It was not the reconciliation it might have been expected to produce. France did not forgive Germany the methods of intimidation she had employed in July and August. Germany could not forgive France for having snatched from her, six years after Tangier, the right to set up a protectorate in Morocco. Nor could she forgive England whose intervention in the dispute had rendered France less pliable than she had hoped. And in England we have observed loud expressions of dissatisfaction from a public eager for peace, a dissatisfaction which turned against Grey when it became known how close to the abyss the nation had stood. His position indeed was not seriously shaken. He had certainly not lost the confidence of the King, who in February bestowed upon him the signal honour of a Knighthood of the Garter, which had been conferred upon only four members of the House of Commons before him. But the triumvirs of Liberal Imperialism, Asquith, Haldane, and himself, perceived that the only way to satisfy public opinion was to do everything in their power to appease the anger of Germany without endangering either the *entente* with France or British naval supremacy.

Their task was made easier by the fact that certain members of the German Government entertained similar sentiments. For a long time the Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, impressed by the persistence with which Metternich, the German Ambassador in London, urged a policy of caution on his Government, had been working for a *rapprochement* between the two countries. As we already know, negotiations had been opened, and had continued until they had been broken off unexpectedly by the despatch of the *Panther* to the harbour of Agadir. At the close of 1911 Bethmann-Hollweg had the support of the Minister of Finance, who shrank from the ruinous expenditure which the new naval law

demanded by the Emperor and Tirpitz involved. And his opposition was increased by the fact that the general staff was beginning to demand a reinforcement of the army and to protest against the excessive expenditure upon the navy which interfered with their plans. The Emperor finally yielded to his Chancellor's arguments and gave him leave to commence negotiations for a pact with England. He did not believe they would be successful. To attempt to reconcile the Anglo-French *entente* with an understanding between England and Germany was, he said, to attempt to square the circle.[1] But the attempt would cost nothing. And its failure would expose British bad faith.

Bethmann-Hollweg lost no time in sending Metternich instructions to begin the negotiations. But the Ambassador disagreed with the procedure the Chancellor proposed. To attempt a formal pact, a species of alliance or semi-alliance, was to invite failure. It would be better to negotiate a colonial agreement on the lines of those already concluded, with France first, then with Russia, and which Grey's speech on November 27 seemed to envisage.[2] The Chancellor left him free to negotiate in his own way and Metternich broached the subject on December 20. Grey, however, showed no anxiety to follow up the suggestion. He was taken by surprise. He could not decide upon his course of action until the Reichstag election in January had determined the lines which German policy would pursue in the immediate future. Moreover, all the ministers were absent on their Christmas holiday and would not return until the beginning of February. Nevertheless, the negotiations continued. Like the negotiations between France and Germany in 1905 and in 1911, they were conducted by business men who constituted themselves unofficial diplomats.[3]

[1] Note appended to a despatch from Metternich to Bethmann-Hollweg, December 20, 1911. (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxi, p. 86 n.)

[2] *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1911, 5th Series, vol. xxxii, pp. 61–2. Grey obviously was making a veiled allusion to the Portuguese colonies and it was in this sense that Metternich interpreted his words in a letter written on November 28 to Bethmann-Hollweg (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxix, p. 274).

[3] See Sir Goschen to Sir A. Nicolson, February 9, 1912: '. . . the Chancellor . . . said that he had just received a despatch from Metternich and that there was evidently some misunderstanding. The idea seemed to prevail in London that Ballin had acted under instructions from the Emperor. This was far from being the case, as neither the Emperor nor he himself had anything to do with Ballin's first step! In fact, he had been most surprised that Cassel had been chosen by His Majesty's Government as our intermediary in an important matter which concerned the two Governments, and when there was a German Ambassador in London. I said that I had certainly understood that Ballin had acted with some authority, but the Chancellor denied it absolutely.' (*British Documents* . . . vol. vi, p. 672.) The Same to the Same, February 10, 1912: 'The Chancellor's remarks to me about

They were Albert Ballin, the great shipbuilder, and Sir Ernest Cassel, the great banker, each a *persona grata* with the courts of Potsdam and Windsor respectively. Ballin sent Cassel to Churchill, who no doubt consulted Asquith, when the latter on January 8 spent a few hours in London. Ballin and Cassel favoured a personal meeting between the two naval ministers, Churchill and Tirpitz. Churchill refused. Such a meeting would commit the British Government too far, as the impression would be given that he had been sent to Berlin to apologize for Lloyd George's outburst. The utmost to which he would agree was to accompany King George to Berlin if the King should ever pay a visit to his cousin.[1] Nevertheless, he welcomed the suggestion of a conversation to discuss the possibility of a mutual limitation of armaments. Lloyd George, who was preparing his Budget for the financial year 1912–13, was asking for economies, and McKenna in one of the last speeches he delivered as First Lord of the Admiralty had promised that the navy estimates for 1912 would not exceed those for 1911, if Germany did not increase her navy.[2] Why not ask the German Government what its intentions were and undertake to call a halt in the armament race, if Germany did not speed it up? He obtained Lloyd George's consent when he returned on January 21 from the Riviera and the decision was taken by a small committee at the end of January before any meeting of the Cabinet

Ballin and Cassel were queer and there must be some—well call it misunderstanding—somewhere. Haldane says that the Chancellor was only trying to save Metternich's face, and that it was hardly necessary for him to allude to it. But then, how about my face if the Germans are allowed to give the impression that His Majesty's Government opened the conversations through Cassel and not through His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin?' (ibid., p. 674) Szögyény. Despatch from Berlin, February 15, 1912: 'The papers comment at length on the fact that Sir Ernest Cassel visited Berlin at the same time as Lord Haldane. Herr von Kiderlen told me that on that occasion he had not met Cassel whom he regards as a busybody.' (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. iii, p. 83.) Kiderlen-Wächter was taking a holiday at Stuttgart when Haldane visited Berlin and was extremely annoyed because he was not consulted (F. Jaeckh, Kiderlen-Wächter, *Staatsmann und Mensch. Briefwechsel und Nachlass herausg.* Von F. Jaeckh 1924, vol. ii, p. 155). Hulderman's *Life of Albert Ballin* does not decide the question. The writer is content to say: 'It was Cassel and Ballin who suggested that another attempt should be made to reach an understanding and the suggestion found a ready welcome from Herr von Bethmann' (p. 248). It would appear that the idea of these conversations suggested itself spontaneously to these two magnates but that the offer of their services was immediately accepted, in what spirit we have attempted to conjecture, by both Governments and also, but with considerable reluctance, by the respective Foreign Offices. Cf. W. Churchill, *The World Crisis, 1911–1914*, p. 95. *Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxi, p. 97 n.

[1] Winston Churchill to Sir E. Cassel, January 7, 1912 (*British Documents* . . . vol. vi, p. 666).

[2] H. of C., March 13, 1911 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1911, 5th Series, vol. xxii, p. 1921).

was held. Churchill probably agreed to the negotiations in the same spirit as the Emperor William. He thought it advisable that they should be opened. He was sure they would fail.

The conversations began on January 29 by the presentation at Berlin of two diplomatic notes. Sir Edward Goschen handed one to Kiderlen-Wächter, Sir Ernest Cassel the other to Bethmann-Hollweg. The former was a long-delayed reply to the German note of June 27 respecting an interchange of naval information. The British Government gave an extremely guarded assent to the principle. Although it was the German Government which at the beginning of November had suggested further negotiations on the subject, the note met with an unfavourable reception in Berlin. It was regarded as an attempt to discover the secret of the German naval law to be introduced shortly.[1] The second was an extremely brief memorandum consisting of three clauses and approved by Grey, Churchill, and Lloyd George. It proposed as the subject of the negotiations a diplomatic agreement, a colonial agreement, and a reduction in the German programme of naval construction.[2] Those were the three points on which during the last two months the Emperor, Metternich, and Churchill had successively desired to negotiate. They were also the three questions unsuccessfully discussed by both Governments for two years, from the summer of 1909 to the summer of 1911. Agadir had not altered the policy of the British Government. The only difference was that the country seemed more anxious than before to reach an understanding. Would this greater anxiety make negotiations any easier than they had been before Agadir?

The German Emperor gave the note a favourable reply, but attached to his acceptance certain reservations of principle and invited Grey to discuss matters with him at Berlin. Before it had been Churchill, now it was Grey. German tactics were always the same. Germany wished to commit the British Government further than it was prepared to be committed. When, on February 2, the first meeting of the Cabinet was held the ministers decided in favour of a more cautious policy. The Minister for War, Lord Haldane—he had been made a peer a few months before—would visit Berlin, accompanied by his brother, a distinguished scientist

[1] *Die Grosse Politik*, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 1911, 5th Series, vol. xxxi, p. 50 *British Documents* . . . vol. vi, p. 662.
[2] Ibid., vol. xxxi, p. 98.

and fellow of an Oxford college, ostensibly to study questions connected with the organization of higher education. Haldane knew German to his finger-tips, was a frequent visitor to the country, and had the *entrée* of the German Embassy in London. He could not fail to have the confidence of every English friend of Germany and every German friend of England. Moreover, he was an intimate friend of Asquith's and a still more intimate friend of Grey's. Both knew all he had done to secure a close co-operation between the British and French armies, if a German army should invade France. In short, the imperialist group in the Cabinet found in him their surest support. He arrived at Berlin on the 8th and left on the 11th after interviews with the Emperor, Tirpitz, Bethmann-Hollweg, and Jules Cambon. This visit, about which no secrecy was maintained, which the officials of the Foreign Office and the British Embassy at Berlin regarded with intense dislike, Conservative opinion greeted with a polite scepticism and Radical opinion welcomed with enthusiasm, produced a profound impression on the Continent. Haldane, it was believed, was going to Berlin to pave the way for a personal visit by Grey or Churchill in the immediate future, if the prospects of an agreement proved favourable. So many documents of every description bearing upon the visit have been published that nothing remains obscure.[1] We must discuss the three points on which the conversations turned and relate the immediate results achieved in respect to each and what forms the negotiation subsequently assumed.

2

It was the German Government which in 1909 had been the first to propose a pact between the two countries and the British Government which had refused, undoubtedly for very cogent reasons. Now the British Government was the first to revive the proposal, though the formula it put forward was more cautious and vaguer than the German formula of 1909. The Cassel note

[1] Th. von Bethmann-Hollweg. *Betrachtungen zum Weltkriege* 1 Teil. *Vor dem Kriege*, 1919, pp. 50 sqq. Viscount Haldane, *Before the War*, 1920, pp. 57 sqq., also *Autobiography*, 1929, pp. 238 sqq. A. von Tirpitz, *Erinnerungen*, 1920, pp. 185 sqq.; and *Politische Dokumente*, vol. i, pp. 280 sqq. *Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxi, pp. 95 sqq. *British Documents* . . . vol. vi, pp. 666 sqq. *Documents diplomatiques français*, 3e Série, vol. ii, *passim*. For Haldane's secret meetings at night with Cassel during his visit to Berlin see his disclosures to Sir Almeric Fitzroy (Sir Almeric Fitzroy, November 10, 1921, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 765).

suggested 'mutual assurances denying each other the power of engaging in designs or combinations whose character might be aggressive to the other'. Metternich, to whom the note was communicated, wanted the word 'aggressive' expunged. England would always maintain that her *entente* with France was defensive. He also wanted the word 'wars' added to 'designs' and 'combinations'. The change would render the formula a pact of unconditional neutrality in the event of war. Germany wanted nothing more from England should she ever decide to crush France by her military strength. The interview between Bethmann-Hollweg and Lord Haldane took precisely the same turn. Haldane proposed a formula similar to that contained in the Cassel note. Bethmann-Hollweg put forward an alternative formula consisting of four articles in which the word 'aggression' was not used and it was expressly stipulated that, if either of the High Contracting Powers should find itself involved in a war with one or more powers, the other should observe towards it at least an attitude of benevolent neutrality and do everything in its power to localize the conflict. The original draft had been worded 'should be attacked by one or more powers'. This wording however raised the question how aggression should be defined and we have just seen why the German Government did not wish to raise the issue. Bethmann-Hollweg had therefore thought it prudent to give the formula a universal application. But the change made it dangerous. In the impossible supposition, Lord Haldane asked, of a British attack upon Denmark or Austria, did Germany really pledge herself to a benevolent neutrality? And on the other hand, how was it possible for England to promise Germany that if she ever made an unprovoked attack upon France, England would stand aside and even adopt an attitude of benevolence? Bethmann admitted the force of the objection. He returned to his original formula and even defined it more stringently. According to the new text, the promise of benevolent neutrality was made conditional. It was restricted to the eventuality that one or other of the contracting powers 'found itself involved in a war in which it was impossible to say that it was the aggressor'. This was the point the negotiations had reached when Haldane returned to England.

Conversations continued between Berlin and London. Haldane did not want a visit which had focused the attention of the entire world upon himself to end in a fiasco. Asquith and Grey would

have been delighted to find a formula which, without alarming France or Russia, would give sufficient satisfaction to Germany to induce her to slacken the pace of her naval construction. But the Emperor William was perhaps right when he spoke of squaring the circle and Grey, preoccupied by efforts to settle the general strike of the collieries, had little time to spare for the question. The permanent officials, who had been extremely annoyed by Haldane's action, if only because their professional pride had been hurt by a procedure which seemed to imply that the conflict between England and Germany could be best settled without the assistance of the professional diplomats, now took their revenge. Nicolson, who for the last eighteen months had replaced Hardinge at the Foreign Office, was at pains to draw up a formula as meaningless as possible.[1] 'England will make no unprovoked attack upon Germany and pursue no aggressive policy towards her. Aggression upon Germany is not the object and forms no part of any Treaty understanding or combination to which England is now a party, nor will she become a party to anything that has such an object.' It was a formula so empty that Paul Cambon, to whom it was communicated, seems to have raised no objection. But for that very reason it was not likely to satisfy the German Government. It demanded the addition of the word 'neutrality'. Grey refused. The utmost to which he would agree was a slight modification of the opening words. Instead of saying 'will make no unprovoked attack', he was prepared to say 'will neither make nor join in any unprovoked attack'. This was not sufficient to satisfy Berlin. The Emperor lost his temper, talked of arming against England, of ordering a mobilization and finally wrote a personal letter to the King of England in which he proposed point blank the conclusion of a treaty of alliance to which France should be invited to adhere.[2] It was a western version of Bjorköe even

[1] 'A formula . . . which will be of as non-committal a character as possible, and also one which will not bind our hands in regard to any eventualities which may possibly arise in the future.' (Sir A. Nicolson to Sir E. Goschen, March 13, 1912; *British Documents* . . . vol. vi, p. 712.)

[2] March 18, 1912 (Von Tirpitz, *Politische Dokumente*, vol. i, p. 331). Cf. a note of the same date by the Emperor attached to a letter from Bethmann-Hollweg written the previous day 'I am proposing to England—since out of consideration for France she *refuses* to pledge us her neutrality—in place of a promise of neutrality an offensive and defensive alliance in which France will be included. If England rejects the offer *she will put herself in the wrong in the eyes of the entire world*, if she accepts, my position at home will be stronger. At the same time Schön in Paris must be informed that although France has behaved outrageously towards the German army and nation, the present Government entertains no

less likely than the latter to be taken seriously by professional diplomatists and which the Emperor himself did not take seriously. Though it was not until April 10 that Metternich officially informed the Foreign Office that since agreement had proved impossible the German Government considered the negotiations closed, by the middle of March, more exactly on March 20, the two Governments must be considered to have abandoned all hope of a satisfactory conclusion.

Nevertheless the affair had an unexpected sequel. On March 27 the British Ambassador in Paris, Sir Frances Bertie, alarmed by the continuation of negotiations of which he disapproved in principle, called on Raymond Poincaré, who for the past six weeks had been President of the Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs, asked leave to speak as 'though he were not an Ambassador', and denounced Grey's weakness. 'It is essential', he declared, 'that Cambon should express his dissatisfaction. If you will only employ firmer language in London, the false step I dread will not be taken.'[1] In London there was no difficulty in reassuring Cambon. Grey, speaking on behalf of the entire Cabinet informed him of his determination not to depart from his final declaration to Metternich. 'Sir Edward Grey', Nicolson explained, 'is fully aware of the situation and if he continues his conversations with Metternich it is simply a matter of tactics. He does not want the rupture to be his doing.'[2] Poincaré took the opportunity to make a new proposition through the intermediary of Cambon.

In 1905 Lord Lansdowne had proposed to reinforce and extend the *entente* with France. But when Delcassé wanted to accept the offer he was defeated by the opposition of Rouvier and his colleagues and compelled to resign. The following winter Rouvier had himself proposed to the British Government what he had refused when England offered it. It was then his turn to be defeated by the caution of the new Liberal Cabinet which had just taken office. In Cambon's opinion the time was ripe after the

unfriendly designs and in the course of negotiations with England has made known its willingness to include France in the alliance. If our proposal is refused the situation is clear. We have done our duty. If it is accepted the peace of Europe is assured. *The agreement which Haldane attempted to negotiate is dead.* I will have nothing more to do with it' (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxi, p. 187).

[1] Raymond Poincaré to Paul Cambon, March 28, 1912. (*Documents diplomatiques français*, 3e Série, vol. ii, pp. 264–5.)

[2] De Fleuriau to Raymond Poincaré, April 4, 1912 (ibid., vol. ii, pp. 309–10).

Agadir episode to revive Lord Lansdowne's project and attempt to define more precisely the obligations the *entente* imposed on the two Western Powers.[1] At the moment Cambon's proposal was not received favourably but it became evident in the course of the summer that if there was a majority in the country which desired better relations with Germany there was an active minority which favoured on the contrary a closer bond with France. The *Morning Post*, the *Daily Express*, the *Spectator*, the *Observer* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* conducted a campaign to transform the *entente* into a formal alliance. In the autumn Cambon renewed the attempt. The negotiations lasted a month, attended by difficulties akin in certain respects to those which had rendered the negotiations with Germany so difficult in the spring. But this time they were overcome. On October 22, Grey and Cambon exchanged letters in which it was agreed that, although the arrangements between the armies and navies of the two countries did not constitute 'an engagement obliging the two Governments to take action under circumstances not yet realized and which possibly might never arise', if either Government had serious reason to expect an unprovoked attack 'by a third power it would immediately consult with the other, whether both Governments should take concerted action to prevent aggression and maintain peace and in the event of an affirmative answer should discuss the concerted measures they were prepared to undertake'. What had been pronounced impossible between England and Germany seemed possible between England and France. The negotiations by which Bethmann-Hollweg had hoped to strengthen Germany's diplomatic position by weakening the *entente* had by a strange repercussion reinforced the latter. Hitherto purely verbal, a moral obligation and no more, it had assumed the character, in however guarded a form, of a written agreement. Hitherto when a British general had dealings with a French general, he represented only the War Office. When Major-General Wilson visited Paris in November he was in a position for the first time to speak on behalf of the Cabinet as a whole.

[1] Minute by Sir A. Nicolson, April 15, 1912. (*British Documents* . . . vol. vi, p. 747.)

But if it soon became clear that a pact of neutrality between England and Germany which should not violate the spirit of the Anglo-French *entente* was an impossibility, why should not England offer Germany a colonial agreement such as that which France had accepted in 1904 and Russia in 1908 without any alliance or pledge of neutrality? An agreement of this kind could not be difficult to achieve. For there was no question in dispute between the two powers. In 1898 a secret agreement had been concluded for the partition of the Portuguese colonies. It had never been put into operation. Had it lapsed? If so, why not revive it? On July 21, at the height of the Agadir crisis, Grey, while protesting against the German claim to settle the question of Morocco without consulting England, hinted to Metternich that England was prepared to make concessions to Germany in Africa if she were willing to negotiate with her instead of ignoring her. In his speech of November 27, as we have already had occasion to mention, he had used language susceptible of the same interpretation. The speech had scarcely been delivered when Metternich was bombarded with colonial offers of every description from Englishmen belonging to the most diverse sections of society and representing every shade of political allegiance.[1] When they were transmitted to the Emperor he repulsed them with indignation.[2] What had England to offer him? The property of other nations to embroil him with their possessors and thus promote the exclusive interest of British policy? But the Ambassador took these advances more seriously, and discussed them with Grey on December 20. In fact a possible colonial agreement was one of the three points of the Cassel note, and extensive concessions outside Europe were one of the inducements put forward by Haldane on his arrival at Berlin ten days later to persuade the German statesmen to abandon their new naval law.

What was the character of the negotiations conducted in this sphere by Haldane during his three days' visit? His account is extraordinarily reserved, and for obvious reasons. It would seem in fact that prepared as he was to purchase at a heavy price a halt

[1] Count von Metternich to Bethmann-Hollweg, December 9, 1911 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxi, pp. 72–3).

[2] Memorandum of Kaiser Wilhelm II, January 11, 1912. (ibid., vol. xxxi, pp. 92 sqq.)

in the German naval programme, he expatiated imprudently on the numerous colonial concessions which, according to him, his country was prepared to make. In the event of a partition of the Portuguese colonies, Germany, if she gave up her claim to the Pacific island of Timor since Australia stood in the way, would receive Loango, which by the terms of the agreement of 1898 was to have formed an English enclave in Angola, and England might even promise the southern half of the Congo should it ever cease to be Belgian. Finally, he was willing to acquiesce in a German annexation of the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba if, in the negotiations pending on the question of Bagdad, Germany were willing to make more concessions to England in the region of the Persian Gulf than she had hitherto been prepared to make.

But when Haldane returned his colleagues made him understand that he had perhaps lost his way in the maze of his diplomatic metaphysics. The Foreign Office protested against the danger of employing an amateur in such serious negotiations; the Colonial Office complained that he had allowed himself to be duped by men better acquainted with the geography of Africa than himself. Nothing more was heard of the proposal for a colonial agreement similar to those already concluded with France and Russia. Nevertheless, the desire to improve the relations between the two countries was still active in England, and it was strengthened by circumstances to which we must return later. On the question of Bagdad conversations continued. And on the subject of the Portuguese colonies they were revived after an interval of fourteen years. The difficulties were not identical nor equally serious in both cases.

The entire aspect of the Bagdad question had been changed when, in November 1910, by an understanding ratified ten months later by a formal instrument, the Russian Government reached an agreement on the subject with the German. It was no longer possible in this region to confront Germany with the concerted policy of the Triple Entente. And the attitude of France on the question had always been ambiguous. French financial interests had been consistently in favour of an understanding in Turkey with German industrialism. But when the French Foreign Office, yielding to their pressure, had attempted to settle the basis of such an arrangement it had been confronted in 1900 with the veto of Russia, in 1903 with the veto of Great Britain. Now, though

French diplomacy was more hostile to Germany than it had been at that time, it was difficult for France to adopt a more uncompromising attitude than her Russian ally and her British friend. For months past England in view of Russia's change of front had realized the necessity of reaching a solution as speedily as possible. On July 31, 1911, when the *Panther* had been a month at anchor in the harbour of Agadir, she proposed to Turkey to internationalize the line between Bagdad and Bassorah, Germany, Russia, France, Turkey, and herself to hold equal shares; from Bassorah, whose port would be built by a British company to the sea if the railway should ever be taken beyond that point, the undertaking would be reserved exclusively to Turkey and herself. But neither Germany nor Turkey would agree to the proposal and for six months Turkey left it unanswered. At the beginning of 1912 she definitely rejected it.

The difficulties were great. The India Office adopted on political grounds an uncompromising attitude on any question which might affect British supremacy on the coast of the Persian Gulf. There were private interests to be considered, a British railway company in the district of Smyrna, an irrigation company in Mesopotamia, and an oil company. There were also French financial interests at stake. If France was ready to stand aside in Mesopotamia and on the Persian Gulf she demanded in compensation concessions to her railway enterprises in Asia Minor. A settlement of the entire question seemed to have been reached at last during the first half of 1914. A Franco-German agreement dealing with the railways in Asia Minor was signed on February 15, 1914. An agreement between England and Germany on the subject of the Bagdad railway, also the railway between Smyrna and Aidin, was initialled on June 15. Important concessions were made to Germany, whose right to extend the line to Bassorah was recognized. All that England asked was that two Englishmen should sit on the board of directors. Detailed provisions were laid down regulating the respective share of British and German capital in financing the construction of the ports of Bagdad and Bassorah, in the navigation of the rivers, irrigation, and the extraction of petroleum. An agreement was reached for the joint construction and control, without underhand competition, of the railway system of Anatolia; and England reserved the right eventually to construct a direct line between Egypt and the Persian

Gulf. After this the delays, deliberate or otherwise, of the Turkish officials, whose consent was essential, protracted the settlement so long that the Convention had not been signed by the end of July. Nevertheless, London and Berlin were anxious to reach a conclusion, Petersburg and Paris were consenting parties. On the eve of the Great War, the four great Powers were in agreement upon the division of spheres of influence throughout the territory which represented what was still left of the Ottoman Empire.[1]

The negotiations relative to the Portuguese colonies were more difficult. Not that agreement on the fundamental issue was impossible; a convention was in fact initialled in August 1913.[2] It was

[1] For the negotiation of the Anglo-German agreement respecting Bagdad see *Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxvii, pp. 139 sqq. See further the interesting and mutually corroborating statements of Marquis Pallavicini (Constantinople, April 5, 1913) and Count Mensdorff (London, May 23, 1913) of the reasons for which in their opinion as a result of the Balkan War England regarded German expansion in Asia Minor with less anxiety than hitherto. (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik*, vol. vi, pp. 40, 504.)

[2] The question of the Portuguese Colonies was in fact reopened by Grey on July 21, 1911—that is to say, at the beginning of the Agadir crisis and the very day on which Lloyd George delivered his bellicose speech. (Count von Metternich to Bethmann-Hollweg, July 21, 1911; *Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxix, p. 199). He would seem to have believed at first that a friendly arrangement might be possible with Portugal, a bankrupt State, for the purchase of her African colonies. An allusion in his speech of November 27 is susceptible of this interpretation. Cf. in the *Naval Annual 1912*, pp. 17–18, the concluding paragraph of Lord Brassey's article entitled 'Suggestions on Naval Administration': 'If no clouds had arisen in Morocco, we might shortly have found ourselves under serener skies. It should have been possible to fulfil our obligations to France without giving offence to Germany. To indicate how reconciliation might be effected would carry us too far into politics. The cession of Walfisch Bay might fittingly be considered as a suitable opportunity. . . . Nor should it be impossible by friendly negotiations to obtain for South Africa full powers of administration in Delagoa Bay, under the flag of Portugal.' *Saturday Review*, January 20, 1912, p. 68: an article entitled 'An Anglo-German Deal': 'The time is now rapidly approaching when Portugal, urgently in need of cash, will offer Angola to German enterprise for a valuable consideration. . . . We have good grounds for saying that our Foreign Office privately intimated that to this acquisition of rich territory by Germany we should raise no objection. . . . We may assume that with Angola will pass the islands of S. Thomé and Principe, though they now form a separate province. . . . When the break-up of the Portuguese Empire begins, it will go on. We ought at once to make sure of Delagoa Bay. . . . Strategists will be less interested in the fate of Portuguese Africa than in that of the Islands. . . . Germany hankers after the Cape Verde group, but she clearly understands we could not permit her to settle there. But is there any valid objection to her acquiring the Azores, if we can buy the Cape Verde islands at the same time?'—also *Spectator*, January 27, 1912, p. 140, article entitled 'Germany and the African Colonies of Portugal': 'We have no doubt whatever that it would be greatly to the benefit of the world if Germany could acquire the African colonies of Portugal, or to put it more correctly, that portion of those colonies over which we do not possess a right of pre-emption—a right which belongs to us in the matter of Delagoa Bay. Not only would it be a great benefit to humanity that German rule, which if sometimes harsh, is, at any rate efficient and gives no sanction or encouragement to slavery, should be substituted for Portuguese rule; in addition Germany would be given the opportunity for expansion which she desires, and on the greatest scale. Her African Empire would thus only require a portion of the Congo Free State to make it stretch across the African continent from sea to sea.' But it soon became clear that Portugal had no intention of selling her colonies and it then became necessary to negotiate, as in 1898, over the head of the Portuguese Government.

more favourable to Germany than its predecessor of 1898. For if Germany renounced Timor and yielded to England in Mozambique a strip of territory to the north of the Zambesi and in Angola a district adjoining Belgian Katanga which constituted an enclave in Rhodesia, she obtained in recompense by the cession of Loango the entire African coast between the German colonies in South Africa and the Belgian Congo and in addition the islands of San Thomé and Principe off the Congo coast. But England insisted that the Convention should be laid before Parliament and thus made public. And the German Government was opposed to its publication.

For the new agreement, unlike that of 1898, had been drawn up in extremely cautious terms so as to deal only with the economic development of the Portuguese colonies, carefully avoiding all reference to the possibility of their political annexation by England or Germany. But in 1913 as in 1898 Germany cherished the design of establishing, sooner or later, her sovereignty over the regions which the convention allotted to her sphere of influence. And the indignation of the German public would be even greater, if, as England also demanded, the publication of the present agreement was accompanied by the publication of the agreement of 1898, whose secret clauses were far more explicit, and, moreover, by the publication of the treaty of Windsor concluded the following year, which expressly confirmed the clause of an old treaty of 1661 by which England pledged herself 'to defend and protect all the conquests and colonies pertaining to the crown of Portugal against all her enemies present or future'. German statesmen blamed this treaty of 1899, the work of Lord Salisbury,[1] for the fact that the convention of 1898 had remained inoperative.[2] In 1902 they had witnessed a British company

[1] For the Anglo-Portuguese agreements of 1898–9 see my *History of the English People* vol. v, pp. 55–6. My conjectures are confirmed and completed by the revelations, made in 1912 by the Marquis de Soveral to Paul Cambon (De Fleuriau to Raymond Poincaré, April 2, 1912; *Documents diplomatiques français*, 3e Série, vol. ii, p. 296 sqq.).

[2] Friedrich von Bernhardi, *Deutschland und der nächste Krieg*, chap. v. 'Weltmacht oder Niedergang,' p. 115: '. . . The financial or political collapse of Portugal might also provide us with an opportunity to take possession of a portion of her colonial possessions. There is even good reason to suppose that agreements are in existence between England and Germany which contemplate a partition of the Portuguese colonies, though they have never been published. Whether, should the circumstances arise, England would be prepared to carry out honourably the provisions of such an agreement, supposing it actually to exist, must indeed remain an open question. She could find ways and means to render it ineffective. It is indeed widely asserted, though the report is denied by others, that immediately after her convention with Germany for a partition of the Portuguese colonies Great Britain concluded a special treaty with Portugal guaranteeing the *integrity* of her colonial empire.'

undertake the construction of a railway linking Katanga with the port of Benguela and traversing the entire zone which the convention of 1898 had appeared to surrender to German industry. In 1913, the very year in which the British Government was prepared to confirm in a modified form the convention of 1898, the Benguela railway company was still refusing offers of collaboration from German capital.

And at this juncture, to increase the difficulties of the British Government, the French Government, to whom the negotiations had been communicated, united its protests on this point to the German protests. France, it is true, objected on grounds altogether different from those which inspired the protests of Berlin. The French Government disliked the agreement for its own sake, and if it were to be published like the Franco-British agreement of 1904, it would assume an equal status in the eyes of the world. It would be liable to be interpreted as the preface to an hypocritical alliance, a return to the policy of 1898, whose abandonment had been sealed by the *entente* with France. The French opposition was finally overcome, but Berlin held out. When at last the German Government agreed to publication it made a declaration of its reluctance and insisted on certain conditions. Publication was to be delayed until six months after the agreement had been signed and the British Government was to exert pressure at Lisbon in the interval to secure a particular concession Germany desired in Angola. We must also bear in mind the date at which the German Government finally agreed to the convention being published. It was July 27, 1914.[1] For three days the whole of Europe had been confronted with a problem of the most extreme gravity and German diplomacy was anxious to do everything in its power to conciliate England.

4

We have followed to 1914 the story of the two negotiations begun, or more accurately reopened, in February 1912 after Haldane's visit to Berlin, on the subject of the Bagdad railway, and the Portuguese colonies. But we must not forget that neither of these two questions, nor even the question of neutrality con-

[1] For the negotiations of the Anglo-German convention respecting the Portuguese colonies see *Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxvii, pp. 1 sqq.

stituted the essence of Haldane's mission. His real objective was to secure a slackening in the pace of German naval construction, and everything turned on the price, colonial concessions, a pact of neutrality, which England was prepared to pay. Germany's terms were onerous, but if England protested she could always reply that great sacrifices were being asked of her. She was being asked to regulate the size of her fleet, not in accordance with the standard she regarded as necessary to protect her commerce and uphold her prestige, but by the standard prescribed by the security and prestige of a foreign power. At every turn we are brought back to the struggle between the two navies. England needed her supremacy at sea to ensure supplies in time of war and to banish the danger of invasion which haunted the Continental nations and compelled them to bear the burden of conscription. But the habit of counting upon the protection of her navy was so deeply ingrained in the British mind that it had become an instinct. England was in love with her navy. Any threat to its supremacy was nothing short of an insult to the national honour. Von Bülow, who employed the leisure of his banishment from political life to meditate upon his country's policy and the international situation, was wide of the mark when he wrote: 'The mainspring of British policy is national selfishness, the mainspring of French policy, national idealism' and went on to draw the conclusion that 'one who seeks his interest with cold-blooded calculation will always prove at the decisive moment master of one who pursues an ideal'.[1] The English would have liked perhaps to settle their difference with the Germans as men of business. But it was impossible. Their navy had a sentimental value for them and Churchill expressed perfectly the true state of affairs when, in an interview with the German Ambassador, he attempted to make him understand that the German fleet was an Alsace-Lorraine between the two countries.[2]

It was the question of the rival navies which had reached a critical phase, this winter of 1911–12, partly as a result of the Agadir incident but also for two other reasons, of which one was directly connected with Agadír, the other had nothing whatever to do with it. The former was the transference of Churchill to the Admiralty.

[1] Furst von Bülow, *Deutsche Politik* . . . 1916, p. 114.

[2] Prince Lichnowsky to Bethmann-Hollweg. April 30, 1913, *Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxix, p. 38. Cf. The letter written the same day to Tirpitz by the German naval attaché (Von Tirpitz, *Politische Dokumente*, vol. i, p. 391).

The real significance of this appointment was not immediately apparent. For five or six years he had been, together with Lloyd George, the foremost champion in the Cabinet of a policy of peace and disarmament, and at the time of the Agadir crisis it was not he but Lloyd George who had surprised Europe by an unexpectedly warlike speech. Had he then remained faithful to the principles he had professed before Agadir? Would he, like his father in a Conservative Cabinet, advocate a policy of naval retrenchment? He had begun his career in the army, and several later incidents had proved that this liberal, even ultra-liberal politician, had remained a soldier at heart. Possibly he felt that he had recovered his vocation, when, as Home Secretary, he despatched the police, his police, to put down a band of Russian anarchists in an East End tenement and like a genuine soldier had directed their operations on the scene of action. Nor can we be in any doubt as to the spirit in which he entered upon his duties at the Admiralty when we remember that he had left the Home Office because the too martial methods he had employed to put down the labour disturbances during the previous summer had rendered his position impossible. The Germans were greatly alarmed by the arrival at the Admiralty of a man whom they labelled 'an unscrupulous demagogue', 'a second edition of Chamberlain', 'a man of unbridled ambition', who could be trusted to make use of his new position to increase his popularity at the first international crisis by 'adding fuel to the flames'.[1] The fact that in a few months he had effected a complete change in the high command of the navy confirmed the estimate of those who had expected him to prove a fighter. He did not dare to recall Fisher and plunge the entire service into internecine feud, but he made him his confidant and corresponded regularly with him. Out of the four Sea Lords he got rid of three. Only the third, Rear-Admiral Briggs, retained his position. The term of office of Sir Arthur Wilson, the First Sea Lord, was due to expire. It was not renewed. He was replaced by Sir Francis Bridgeman, who a few months later was in turn brusquely dismissed,[2] Prince Louis of Battenberg

[1] The naval attaché in London Captain Widenmann to Tirpitz (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxi, p. 13). Note by the German Minister of Marine, November 1911. (Von Tirpitz, *Politische Dokumente*, vol. i, pp. 255–6.)

[2] For the dismissal of Sir Francis Bridgeman see the heated debate in the House of Commons between Churchill and Lord Charles Beresford (H. of C., December 11, 18, 20, 1912, *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1912, 5th Series, vol. xlv, pp. 433–4, 1469 sqq., 1875 sqq.); also A. MacCallum Scott, *Winston Churchill in Peace and War*, 1916, p. 43.

became Second Sea Lord in place of Sir George Egerton, and Captain Pakenham Fourth Sea Lord in place of Rear-Admiral Madden.[1] Immediately after his appointment Churchill satisfied what had been the general desire of the public ever since the scare in August by effecting at the Admiralty the reform Haldane had accomplished at the War Office. He instituted a Naval War Staff, the 'brain' of the British navy, to work out plans of campaign for future wars and through which all candidates for naval command must pass.[2] Its functions were purely advisory. The responsibility for the decisions taken rested with the First Lord of the Admiralty. Equipped with this novel bureau of information and surrounded by new councillors of his own choice, Churchill felt himself a naval commander. He divided his time between the Admiralty and its official yacht the *Enchantress*, in which he made voyages of inspection and study. His enemies complained that when he was present at manœuvres he interposed with advice which was almost a command and was too ready to play the admiral. In short, for the first time for many years, the First Lord of the Admiralty was not the mere mouthpiece of the Sea Lords. A statesman of the first rank had arisen at the Admiralty to confront Tirpitz.[3]

5

For at the moment when the Agadir crisis placed Churchill at the Admiralty the execution of the German naval law had reached a critical point, though the question of Morocco played no part in the matter. Ever since 1900 Berlin had been straining every nerve to build up a huge navy, but the question of personnel had not received corresponding attention. There were not sufficient sailors to man the German fleet and in autumn when one class of sailors having completed its two years service left the navy the vessels

[1] For these changes see H. of C., November 28, 1911 (*Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xxxii, pp. 359 sqq.).

[2] *Naval War Staff, Memorandum by the First Lord on a Naval War Staff*, January 1, 1912 (published as an appendix to the *Statement by the First Lord of the Admiralty explanatory of the Navy Estimates, 1912–1913*). See further the circular addressed on May 11, 1912 to all 'commanders-in-chief, captains, commanders and commanding officers' (*The Times*, March 14, 1912).

[3] For Winston Churchill at the Admiralty see an interesting chapter in A. MacCallum Scott, *Winston Churchill in Peace and War*, 1916, pp. 41 sqq.

were left for the moment practically empty. The navy was obliged to ask for reinforcements. In place of an annual increase of 3,500 men which would produce in 1917 a total of 86,500 sailors, Tirpitz obtained from the Reichstag 15,000 additional seamen of all ranks which would raise the entire personnel of the navy in 1920 to the figure of 101,500. This would make it possible to maintain three squadrons, instead of two, on active service—that is to say, twenty-five capital ships instead of seventeen. On the other hand, whereas the programme as originally laid down provided for the construction of four capital ships every year up to the current year 1912, for the next five years—that is to say, until 1917—it made provision for the annual construction of no more than two. As we should expect, the Ministry of Marine and the Navy League protested against this sudden decrease in naval construction. And the entire shipbuilding industry echoed their protests. For it is the tragic feature of modern industry—and of the armament industry with the rest—that it leads of its very nature to over-production. To increase the output the apparatus of production is extended, and it therefore becomes impossible to slow down the rate of production without throwing workmen and engineers out of employment and tying up capital, and industry is condemned to go on producing at a tempo it cannot slacken. Tirpitz asked for an extra vessel to be laid down annually for the next six years—that is, a total construction of three battle cruisers to replace those condemned as obsolete and three Dreadnoughts over and above those for which the programme of 1900 made provision.

We have however already had occasion to speak of the opposition in official circles to a new naval law. It was so powerful that the Emperor was obliged to make concessions. They were not concerned with the increase of personnel or the formation of a third squadron but solely with the construction of new ships. In the first place the three cruisers were given up. Instead of laying down six ships between 1912 and 1917 in addition to those provided by the original programme, only three would be built, the first in 1912, the second in 1914, and the third in 1916. This was the position when Haldane visited Berlin. The condition on which the Emperor would agree to slacken the pace of German naval construction was that England should abandon her programme of laying down two capital ships for one German and accept the

proportion of three to two which Grey had himself proposed a few months before Agadir. Haldane made no direct reply. He expressed himself indifferent to the increase in the number of ships on the active list and its corollary an increased personnel. He gave the Germans with whom he talked to understand that only one subject caused his English colleagues anxiety—the programme of naval construction. He suggested that an understanding might be reached if Germany consented not to lay down an additional ship in 1912, but build the first in 1913, a second in 1915, and postpone indefinitely the construction of the third.

Perhaps he thought this clever tactics. When he returned to London he found that his colleagues were of a very different opinion. He might have taken warning from a speech made by Churchill at Glasgow on February 9, the day before the Berlin conversations opened. In this speech Churchill formulated the British attitude on the naval question in terms which became canonical: 'The British Navy is to us a necessity and, from some points of view, the German Navy is to them more in the nature of a luxury. Our naval power involves British existence. It is existence to us; it is expansion to them. . . . It is the British Navy which makes Britain a great Power. But Germany was a great Power, respected and honoured all over the world, before she had a single ship'. The effort which at the same moment the German Government was demanding from the Reichstag and the nation to increase the personnel of army and navy alike was the challenge of an overpeopled Germany, not only to France but to England herself; for the Germans were convinced that an England short of men and obliged to purchase crews for her navy could not maintain for long a struggle against Germany, where conscription was in force and the population increasing at the rate of a million a year.[1] Experts pointed out to Haldane that the formation of a third squadron on active service which he regarded so lightly constituted a new danger. It meant a German fleet permanently mobilized in the North Sea against England, ready when the signal was given to make a sudden attack. And the construction of ships in excess of the number laid down in the programme of 1900, however few, necessitated the construction

[1] Count von Metternich to Bethmann-Hollweg, November 1, 1911: '. . . England is convinced of her ability to sustain, if need be, a competition in armaments, longer than we, because she believes that she possesses the longer purse.' The Emperor wrote in the margin 'She has fewer men' (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxi, p. 21).

of additional English vessels. If the object of Haldane's visit had been to prevent this further competition he had failed.

And in fact when Churchill produced navy estimates lower by £307,000 than those for the current year he explained that they were provisional. He asked for an immediate increase of two thousand men. He proposed to lay down new cruisers. But he intended eventually to make further demands both for men and ships when the German estimates became known. As between the capital ships of the two nations he would accept a proportion of sixteen to ten, a proportion not far from the ratio of three to two which had been suggested. But only on condition that Germany did not exceed the programme of 1900. If in the course of the next six years she were to build additional vessels, England would accept her challenge and return to the old proportion of 'two keels to one'. If during these six years Germany laid down three extra ships, England would lay down six. If she built only two, England would build four. There was no note of aggression in this rejoinder; and Churchill put forward the novel suggestion that, if Germany were willing to proclaim a 'naval holiday' for one year during which she would not lay down a single new man-of-war, England would undertake to do the same. In May the German programme was made public. Bethmann-Hollweg and Haldane had defeated the Emperor and Tirpitz, though not without a hard struggle, in the course of which the Chancellor had been driven to the threat of resignation. Only two Dreadnoughts were to be built during the next six years instead of the three decided upon in February, and the six capital ships, ironclads and cruisers, for which Tirpitz had asked in November. When therefore Churchill presented in July his supplementary navy estimates, he was content with four additional Dreadnoughts to be built between 1913 and 1917. But at the same time he was obliged to take into account the German formation of a third active squadron and the increase in her personnel. Amid the chilly silence of the Radicals and the applause of the Opposition he asked for a supplementary grant of £990,000.[1]

[1] H. of C., July 22, 1912 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1912; 5th Series, vol. xli, pp. 838 sqq.).

No English Lord of the Admiralty since the century opened had spoken so frankly of the German peril, yet no English navy estimates were received with greater calm by German opinion. The official attitude in Berlin was satisfaction. And the following year Tirpitz astonished the world by his moderation. He rejected the imputation of harbouring hostility towards England. He would be satisfied with the proportion of sixteen to ten, with which England, or so at least he hoped, was now content. 'That proportion', he said, 'makes us sufficiently strong to be secure against attack. The naval law guarantees its maintenance. We desire nothing more.'[1] How are we to explain this sudden calm after such feverish activity? The Foreign Office thought it knew the answer and on March 5 Grey wrote as follows to the British Ambassador in Berlin: 'I do not wish you to say anything about Tirpitz's statement, unless something is said to you, because I agree that what Tirpitz said does not amount to much, and the reason of his saying it is not the love of our beautiful eyes, but the extra fifty millions required for increasing the German Army.'[2]

In October 1911, at the moment the Agadir crisis reached a solu-

[1] From a statement made by Tirpitz on February 6, 1913, to the financial committee of the Reichstag. Macnamara, Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty, speaking on behalf of Churchill in the House of Commons on February 11, expressed the satisfaction universally felt in England at the new tone adopted by Germany in regard to the naval question. (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1913, 5th Series, vol. xlviii, p. 685.)

[2] Sir E. Grey to Sir E. Goschen, March 5, 1913 (Lord Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty-five Years*, vol. i, p. 257). Cf. Lloyd George, interview given to the *Daily Chronicle*, January 1, 1914. Of two reasons suggested for the relaxation of the naval competition between England and Germany Lloyd George chose the following 'that Continental nations are directing their energies more and more to the strengthening of their land forces. For years Germany seemed to have set her heart upon, and put her best thought into, the development of her naval power. But the experiences of the last two years have reminded her of a lesson which all European nations have had from time to time to learn. And that is, that if a country concentrates its energies upon one branch of its defensive forces, it is generally at the expense of the other. The German army is vital . . . to the very life and independence of the nation itself, surrounded as Germany is by other nations, each of which possesses armies almost as powerful as herself. . . . Certainly Germany has nothing' (so far as her army is concerned) 'which approximates to a Two-Power Standard. She has, therefore, become alarmed by recent events, and is spending huge sums of money on the expansion of her military resources. That is why I feel convinced that even if Germany ever had any idea of challenging our supremacy at sea, the exigencies of the military situation must necessarily put it completely out of her head' Cf. J. Ellis Barker, 'The Failure of Post-Bismarckian Germany' (*Nineteenth Century*, June 1912, vol. lxxi, pp. 1058 sqq., especially pp. 1075 sqq.) and a remarkable article by Crozier Long 'The End of Weltpolitik: a Letter from "Berlin" ' (*Fortnightly Review*, June 1914, vol. cxv, pp. 983 sqq.). For the article, possibly the best written before August 1914 on the origins of the war, see Lichnowsky's appreciative comments (Letter to Bethmann-Hollweg, June 10, 1914: *Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxix, p. 621).

tion, the first edition appeared of Bernhardi's famous work, *Germany and the Next War*.[1] The writer was far from suggesting that his country should give up her navy. But he was opposed in principle to any strategy which involved a conflict with the British navy on the high seas. Germany should be content to defend her shores against the attempts at invasion which were to be expected, and by reinforcing her fleet of torpedo-boats and submarines and evading the British blockade must place herself in a position to reply to it by destroying the greatest possible number of British merchant vessels. She must take the offensive on land and to free her hands in the east must begin under any circumstances by crushing France, whose army, too weak to invade German territory, would otherwise by its mere existence render an offensive on any other front impossible.[2] These views had been held for many years by the German staff. The novel feature of the situation was the fact that the civil authorities were coming round to them. We have already observed as an immediate repercussion of the Agadir incident, the pressure exerted in the counsels of the Government by the champions of a stronger army to secure, in the teeth of Tirpitz and the Emperor, a reduction in the new naval programme, while the Reichstag was to be asked to pass a new army law. It was also a novelty that these ideas were now publicly expressed, not only by Bernhardi, but by others whose opinions carried weight.[3] In January 1912, 'A League to secure a stronger

[1] *Deutschland und der nächste Krieg*. The sixth edition revised 'in view of the alterations in the military and political situation' was published in 1913.

[2] 'In the first place our political position would be enormously improved if we could free ourselves once and for all from the constant danger that France will attack us on the first favourable opportunity as soon as our hands are full elsewhere. One way or another *France must be put out of action* if we would be free to pursue the general aims of our policy. This is *the first and most essential condition* of a sound German policy, and since it is impossible to rid ourselves finally of French hostility by peaceful methods, we must do so by force. France must be so completely crushed, that she can never cross our path again' (*Deutschland und der nächste Krieg*, pp. 113–4).

[3] In a lecture entitled 'Deutschland und England. Heeres oder Flottenverstärkung? Ein historisch-politischer Vertrag, gehalten an 25 Jan. 1912 in der Heidelberger Ortsgruppe des Deutschen Flottenverein'. (Germany and England. Should we strengthen our Army or Navy? An Historical and Political Lecture delivered on January 25, 1912, to the Heidelberg group of the German Navy League), the German historian Hermann Oncken develops the argument that if Germany wished to help the English Radicals to overthrow Grey it was the worst possible tactics to build men-of-war. It was the army that must be reinforced. 'To strengthen our army is a real, indeed our best safeguard against England herself, and does not arouse her to violent action by a direct threat.' It is a protection on the Continent against the 'English dagger'. 'The demand for a stronger army is not therefore the expression of an uncalculating military enthusiasm. It is due simply and solely to a practical consideration of our opponent's strength with which we have to reckon and of the aims we intend to achieve. A powerful army is the weapon which will wound

Army' was formed which, copying the methods of propaganda employed by the Navy League, in a far shorter space of time effected for the army what the latter had done for the navy at the close of the nineteenth century. For several years Germany reassured by the complete disorganization of the Russian army and the increasing deterioration of the French had lost much of her interest in the army and turned her eyes to the sea. Given the enormous increase of the German population it was sufficient if half the young men of twenty were called to the colours. The position would soon be changed.

By the army law of 1912 two new army corps were formed, one on the Russian frontier, the other on the French, and measures were adopted to secure that on these two frontiers ten army corps out of twenty-five should be permanently maintained on what was approximately a war footing. The law of 1913 of a far more redoubtable character added a third battalion of eighteen infantry regiments, formed new regiments of cavalry and heavy artillery, and increased the effectives by 4,000 officers, 15,000 non-commissioned officers, 117,000 corporals and privates and 27,000 horses. As a result of these two successive measures Germany was maintaining under the colours in time of peace 870,000 instead of 625,000 troops, and in the event of war could put into the field an army of 5,400,000. The law of 1913 was passed amid an outburst of patriotic enthusiasm, stimulated by the celebrations which commemorated the centenary of the war of independence. And these celebrations inevitably lent German patriotism an aspect of hostility to France which replaced the anti-English feeling by which it had so often been coloured in the immediate past.

This powerful current of public opinion carried the Emperor with it. How could he long remain deaf to the appeal of a patriotic

him in his most vulnerable spot, his system of a Continental balance of power.' (*Historische politische Aufsätze und Reden*, vol. i, pp. 167 sqq.). Almost two years later Oncken contributed to the *Quarterly Review* (October 1913, Art. 13, *Germany under William II, 1888–1913*, vol. ccxix, pp. 566 sqq.) an article in which he argues that since Germany's policy had become continental instead of naval the moment is favourable for a *rapprochement* between the two nations. 'As this impression' (that the German nation desires peace) 'gains strength in England, it may be legitimate to hope that the *détente*, thus carefully prepared and utilized, will eventually lead to an Anglo-German agreement. An agreement of this kind embracing, as it naturally would, both the Near East and Central Africa, would inspire the German people with the conviction that England is prepared loyally to throw open to them the roads which have hitherto been kept systematically barred against them. In any case, the ties which bind the two nations together are, after all, stronger than the rivalries which divide them' and in support of his contention he refers to his lecture of 1912.

sentiment which, as he was well aware, charged him with weakness and held him responsible for the shameful retreats which had led Germany from Tangier to the agreement of November 4, 1911.[1] But he had done nothing to arouse it. On the contrary he was witnessing, and he knew it, the ruin of that dream of an anti-British naval expansion which had been his consistent ideal throughout his reign. It was a policy which necessitated friendship not only with Russia but with France. But it was becoming only too clear that, so far as France was concerned, it had failed. Caillaux's fall had brought into office the conscientious and industrious bourgeois and keen lawyer who for many years to come would embody French policy in the eyes of the world. Raymond Poincaré put an end to the attempts recently made by French diplomacy to explore avenues to an understanding with Italy, Austria, and Germany. These attempts had been marred by two defects. They were inconsistent and they tended to loosen the *entente* with England and the alliance with Russia and might perhaps leave France finally isolated when another crisis arose like those of Tangier and Agadir. Poincaré desired to strengthen the alliance with Russia, and make the *entente* with England for all practical purposes an alliance, so that the Triple Alliance might be permanently counterbalanced by a reorganized Triple Entente. The competition in armies began once more between the Continental Powers. After hesitating for several months and leaving unanswered the German law of 1912, which was itself the response to Caillaux's fall, France replied to the law of 1913 by the supreme effort of imposing three years' military service instead of two upon the entire youth of France. Russia also armed in answer to the German armaments. The ruling class indulged the belief that

[1] We may refer in this connection to Gerhart Hauptmann's topical drama, *Festspiel im deutschen Reimen*, a 'Memorial to the Spirit of the War of Independence'. The Crown Prince attended its production at Breslau and applauded the author's allusions to his father's incapacity. We may quote in particular the words Hauptmann places in Schnadhorst's mouth:

> A forest of heroes fills our land,
> Not spinsters we pass with a beck of the hand,
> Warriors march thick as the grains of sand.
>
> . . . . .
>
> If only a new old Fritz might grace
> To delight our hearts, the leader's place!
> But a man we lack to match the mood
> Of the hour, the monarch of Germanhood,
> Of prince and people to bow the knee,
> And show them the path to liberty.

the revolution had been finally defeated and began once more to alarm the world by the number, if not the organization, of Russia's armed forces. In his speech of November 27, Grey had conjured up the spectre of a Europe united against England. The danger had been dispelled. All the Great Powers of Europe were arming against each other. It was a guarantee for the security of Great Britain.

7

Unfortunately if the Foreign Office by the new system of *ententes* inaugurated in 1904 had dispelled certain risks, the system itself may well have involved England in a new danger—the danger of being dragged by the armed powers into a European war. There was a group of alarmists who were never weary of insisting upon the German peril and demanding the transformation of the *entente cordiale* into an alliance. They denounced the presumed designs of the German Government on the Dutch port of Flushing on the Belgian frontier. They sought opportunities to create a panic and as a further ground for alarm pointed out that England possessed few or no aeroplanes, few or none of those Zeppelins which were the pride of Germany. And from time to time the absurd rumour was circulated that a squadron of these airships had been seen flying above some English county or other.[1] But the scaremongers did not make the same impression on the public as they had done four years earlier. Throughout the country there was a widespread desire to loosen without actually breaking the network of *ententes* and it was to satisfy public feeling that the Cabinet despatched Haldane to Berlin and negotiated on the subject of the Bagdad railways and the Portuguese colonies. Anti-German literature no longer found readers.[2] The important

[1] F. W. Hirst, *The Six Panics and Other Essays*, 1913, pp. 103 sqq.

[2] Charles Sarolea, *The Anglo-German Problem*, Ed. i, December 1912. See especially pp. 36–7. '. . . *One of the crucial points* of the Anglo-German controversy—the naval policy of the German Empire. I advisedly said *one* of the critical points, for it is by no means the only one nor even, in my opinion, the most important one. As I shall presently endeavour to prove, *if Germany suddenly decided to reduce her naval armaments and to increase her army in proportion, England would have even more serious reasons for anxiety than she has at present.*' Why? Because (pp. 43–4) 'the greatest danger to England is not the invasion of England, it is the invasion of France and Belgium. . . . It is . . . in France and Belgium that the vulnerable point lies, the Achilles' heel of the British Empire'. But the book attracted no attention whatever. It was only after the declaration of war that it reached a second, third and fourth edition. (August, October 1914; February 1915.) See also: Archibald

reviews closed their columns to writers of articles against Germany. Among young intellectuals it had become more fashionable than ever to regard Germany as a second mother country.[1] After the Agadir crisis, as after the naval panic of 1909, conferences were held and committees formed to seek a basis of reconciliation between the two nations.[2] After the brief interregnum of Baron

Hurd and Henry Castle, *German Sea-Power, Its Rise, Progress, and Economic Laws* 1913. But its tone differs from that of Hurd's earlier works and the introduction ends with an appeal for a *rapprochement* (pp. xiv-xv): 'The only hope for the disappearance of the antagonism between the two peoples lies in a comprehension of each other's economic and strategical necessities; and, if this volume succeeds in giving to Englishmen a truer conception of German policy and German economic and maritime development, and to Germans a better appreciation of the position of the British people as the guardians of an Empire to which unchallengeable sea-power is a necessity, it will have done something to dispel those dark clouds which still hang menacingly on the political horizon.' J. A. Cramb, *Germany and England*, 1914 (A. C. Bradley's preface is dated April) is the posthumous publication of a course of lectures delivered in February and March 1913. The work is deliberately bellicose, but its bizarre conclusion deserves to be quoted (pp. 136–7). 'If the dire event of a war with Germany—if it *is* a dire event—should ever occur, there shall be seen upon this earth of ours a conflict which, beyond all others, will recall that description of the great Greek wars:

"Heroes in battle with heroes,
And above them the wrathful gods."

And one can imagine the ancient, mighty deity of all Teutonic kindred, throned above the clouds, looking serenely down upon the conflict, upon his favourite children the English and the Germans, locked in a death struggle, smiling upon the heroism of that struggle, the heroism of the children of Odin the War-God.'

[1] 'Germany which I feel to be my own country after England.' (F. H. Keeling to Mrs. Townshend, August 2, 1914. *Keeling Letters and Recollections*, 1918, p. 178.) Keeling continues: 'The best thing that can happen now is for Germany to be victorious everywhere on land and for us to come out top everywhere on sea.'

[2] See the two special numbers, devoted to a *rapprochement* between England and Germany, of Ludwig Stein's review, *Nord und Süd* (36 Jahrgang. Bd. 14. June and July 1912) also: *Deutschland und England in ihren wissenschaftlichen, politischen und kulturellen Beziehungen. Verhandlungen der Deutchs-Englischen Verständigungskonferenz (vom 30 Oktober bis zum 1 November 1912). Im Auftrage der Vereinigten Komittees. Herausgegeben von Ernst Sieper* 1913. (Germany and England in their scientific, political, and cultural relations. Proceedings of the German-English Conciliation Conference held from October 30 to November 1, 1912. Published for the Joint Committee by Ernst Sieper, 1913. Translated into English under the title *England and Germany*.) The questions discussed by the conference were: 1. Economic competition. 2. The Press. 3. The immunity of private property in wartime. 4. The demarcation of the colonial spheres of interest of both countries. The question of the navy was, therefore, prudently omitted. See further: *Germany in the Nineteenth Century*, five lectures by J. H. Rose, C. M. Herford, E. C. K. Gonner and M. E. Sadler. With an introductory note by Viscount Haldane. Manchester University Press, 1912. Holland Rose's article on 'political history' concludes with a defence of German policy (pp. 20–22): 'It is unquestionable that the formation of the German Empire has conduced to the peace of the world. . . . If we look at the past, we find that our forefathers dreaded France far more than the wildest alarmist now dreads Germany. And their dread was with reason. The position of France gives her great advantages for an attack on England and English commerce. . . . When France and Spain were leagued together against us, as was often the case, the blockade of their combined fleets was well-nigh impossible. That of the German naval ports is a far simpler task. Further the geographical position of Germany is far weaker than that of France. She has no natural frontiers on the East and poor barriers on the South and West. Her policy is therefore almost necessarily defensive. . . . By land she is easily assailable on three sides; by sea she is less vulnerable; but there she labours

Marschall, Prince Lichnowsky succeeded as German Ambassador in London Count Metternich, who had been recalled in disgrace. By his wealth, the lavish scale on which he entertained, and his affability he made the Embassy with his wife's help an important social centre. He was a friend of Asquith, Grey, and Haldane. Oxford gave him a public reception. When the summer of 1914 opened, he could boast that he had conquered British society.

Why did the public with a determination which seemed to increase in strength refuse to heed war cries which had evoked so wide a response in 1908. In the first place there was a keen desire to remain neutral in the event of a European war. And in the second place public attention was absorbed by serious domestic problems. A general strike in the collieries accompanied Haldane's mission and the speeches in which Churchill developed his naval programme. The threat of civil war in Ireland became ever more urgent. It was enough to face revolution without facing war as well. The *Daily News* and the *Manchester Guardian* every morning, the *Nation* every Saturday, denounced the policy of armaments. A general election was approaching. How could a Government which had avowedly been put into power at the opening of 1906 on a programme of opposition to a ruinous imperialism justify to its Radical voters the increase in the navy estimates since 1908? In the Cabinet itself Churchill had to face a determined opposition. Until 1911 it was he who, first at the Board of Trade then at the Home Office, had attacked McKenna, the First Lord of the Admiralty, for yielding to the exorbitant demands of his Board. Now he was at the Admiralty and McKenna at the Home Office retorted his former criticisms. Until 1911 the imperialism of Asquith, Grey, and Haldane had been attacked by the formidable combination of Lloyd George and Churchill. Now, after those few weeks when all five had agreed in opposing the German

under a great disadvantage, viz. that her oceanic commerce has to pass through the Straits of Dover and down the English Channel, within easy striking distance of the French and British fleets at Brest, Plymouth, Cherbourg, Portsmouth and Dover. This is what makes her nervous about her mercantile marine. This is what makes her build a great fleet; and again I say, were we in her situation we should do the same. . . . The events of the years 1866–1871 . . . helped her to build up on a sure basis a new European system which has maintained the peace for forty years. . . . German unification effected at one stroke what Great Britain with all her expenditure of blood and treasure had never been able to effect; namely, to assure the Balance of Power in so decisive a way as to make a great war the most risky of ventures.' For the entire movement in favour of a *rapprochement* between England and Germany see Bernadotte Everly Schmitt, *England and Germany, 1740–1914*, 1916, pp. 353 sqq.

threat, the three imperialists had become a moderate group pushed forward by Churchill, held back by Lloyd George. The recurrent disputes between these two statesmen when the annual Budget was drawn up were an additional source of embarrassment to a Cabinet battling with so many difficulties. No doubt the two demagogues were fully convinced of their sincerity when they championed their conflicting views in the Cabinet. Each had returned to his youthful creed—Churchill the aristocrat and soldier, Lloyd George the plebeian and humanitarian pietist. But we must not forget that the parliamentary struggle had its reverse. The two tribunes remained the intimate personal friends they had become between 1906 and 1911, and continued to hold long conversations almost daily at Westminster.[1] However sharply they might appear to disagree on one of the most serious issues of the day, on one point at least they found it easy to agree. In the Liberal Cabinet they alone counted for anything. All the others were ciphers.

At the close of 1913 the conflict assumed a dramatic character. In 1912 and in 1913 the Budget, on the new foundation laid by Lloyd George in 1909, met without additional taxation the increased demands of the Admiralty. But this time the Admiralty asked too much. The navy estimates had approached the figure of £43,000,000 in 1911-12, had exceeded £44,000,000 in 1913-14. Now the Admiralty was asking for £51,550,000. In December the National Liberal Federation organized an agitation on a large scale against the increased expenditure on the navy. On January 1, Lloyd George in a lengthy interview given to the *Daily Chronicle* spoke of the improvement in the relations between England and Germany, insisted that it justified a decrease in naval expenditure, and recalled how almost thirty years before Churchill's father had resigned his position as Chancellor of the Exchequer in a Conservative administration, because the Government had refused to reduce the army estimates. Churchill found it necessary to visit Paris to remove the anxiety of the French Minister of Marine. He

[1] Asquith to his wife, January 23, 1914: 'I think we shall get through our little troubles over the Navy without much more ado. Lloyd George squeezing in one direction, and Winston in the other. Neither of them wants to go and in an odd sort of way they are really fond of one another' (J. A. Spender and C. Asquith, *Life of Lord Oxford and Asquith*, vol. ii, p. 76). Sir Almeric Fitzroy, *Memoirs*, March 7, 1914: '. . . In the course of the dinner we had one Birrellism which is worth noting. Winston had said that no day of the session passed without his having half an hour's talk in the House of Commons with Lloyd George, upon which Birrell "In that case neither of you can be bored" ' (vol. ii, p. 540).

had indeed publicly pledged himself six weeks earlier to resign rather than accept the reductions in the expenditure of his department which the Cabinet was demanding,[1] and a fortnight before had brought up the question at a Cabinet meeting and announced his determination, if he failed to receive satisfaction, to resign for a reason the exact reverse of that for which his father Lord Randolph had resigned in 1886. In the end he carried the day. He introduced his huge estimates, merely promising reductions in the following years. The same promises had been made in 1911, and in a year's time, when the general election had been held, who could tell which party would be in office? We are indeed surprised by the ease with which he won his victory when we contrast the outcry raised by the Radical Press for the last two years with the extreme paucity of his opponents in the House. Only thirty-five and four members respectively voted against him at the solitary sitting during which a division was twice taken,[2] whereas a hundred and ninety Unionists supported a motion demanding a further reinforcement of the British navy.[3]

8

In a conversation with the German naval attaché Prince Louis of Battenberg spoke of the debt of gratitude which the British navy owed to Churchill. He had succeeded in extracting a larger sum from the Chancellor of the Exchequer than any previous Lord of the Admiralty.[4] How did he do it? Was it that his personal friendship with Lloyd George enabled him to employ persuasion successfully when another man must have used threats? In 1912 and in 1913 perhaps; but in 1914 he had been compelled to have recourse to threats. He spoke of resigning followed possibly by the four Sea Lords. He also hinted at a compromise with the Unionists on the Irish question, let it be rumoured that he was contemplating a return to his original allegiance. The Radicals took fright. The Irish crisis was enough without the further com-

[1] Speech at the Mansion House, November 10, 1913.
[2] H. of C., March 23, 1914 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1914, 5th Series, vol. lx, pp. 140 sqq., 143 sqq.).
[3] H. of C., March 17, 1914 (ibid., vol. lix, pp. 196 sqq.).
[4] Report of the naval attaché in London, February 6, 1913 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxix, p. 13).

plication of a revolution at the Admiralty. They gave way and Churchill remained at his post. He purchased this complaisance on the question of armaments by again becoming an uncompromising champion of Home Rule.[1] In short his attitude was once more what it had been in 1912 and 1913. He had passed over to the imperialist camp. But on all questions except those of foreign policy he remained an advanced Liberal of Socialist sympathies. And even in his administration of the Admiralty he gave pledges to democratic opinion.

In speaking of Admiral Fisher's reforms we made only a brief mention of the discontent prevalent among the crews of the navy. For that great reformer did very little to allay it.[2] It was not it would seem until about 1906—that is to say, when Fisher had already effected the substance of his reforms—that the discontent assumed a definite shape, in consequence of the great explosion of Liberal ideas which produced the Radical victory at the election of 1906 and which that victory in turn intensified. In May 1905 the publication commenced of a weekly paper called *The Fleet* edited by Lionel Yexley, a former blue-jacket, which enjoyed a wide circulation among the sailors, whose claims it championed with considerable skill.[3] And shortly afterwards their grievances began to be presented annually in a more concise form in a publication composed by sailors and entitled *Naval Magna Charta; An Appeal from the Lower Deck.*

For a long time the Press kept silence about this agitation which had no direct interest for its regular readers, to whom this extension of syndicalist methods to the navy was repugnant from the outset. It was however inevitable. Living in these armour-plated barracks, the new ironclads, under conditions more akin to those of a factory than a battleship of the old style and mingling at the large naval bases with the civilian proletariat during the long periods when their vessels were in port the sailors could not escape the contagion. The concentration of the squadrons in home waters

[1] Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis, 1911–1914*, pp. 177–8.

[2] For what was accomplished particularly in improving the conditions of life on board see Charles Watney and James A. Little, *The Workers' Daily Round*, 1913, pp. 60 sqq. A. S. Hurd, 'Progress or Reaction in the Navy' (*Fortnightly Review*, April 1906; n.s. vol. lxxix, p. 710).

[3] See further a work by the same author describing the conditions under which the sailors lived. *The Inner Life of the Navy. Being an Account of the Inner Social Life led by our Naval Seamen on board Ships of War, together with a detailed Account of the Systems of Victualling and Uniform in vogue during the latter Part of the Nineteenth and the opening Years of the Twentieth Century*, 1908; also *Our Fighting Sea Men*, 1911.

in accordance with the new policy of the Admiralty increased the opportunities of infection,[1] and the Admiralty was alarmed by the growing tendency of officers and men to interest politicians in their demands. A writer of syndicalist sympathies, Stephen Reynolds, was probably the first civilian to concern himself with the conditions of the seamen on the Lower Deck and bring their grievances to the notice of the public. He began his agitation at the time Churchill went to the Admiralty.[2] The political motives which induced Churchill to seek popularity by taking up the question are obvious. But at this particular juncture he had further inducements to do so. The Government was increasing the naval effectives. In a country where conscription was in force nothing could be easier or cheaper. This was not the case in England. So long as it was a question of building three ironclads for every two German or even two for one, England could sustain the struggle. She possessed the necessary wealth. But it was not so easy to secure by voluntary enlistment the sailors required to man a fleet constantly increasing in size, if the population of the sea-board and ports looked askance at the service, joined in insufficient numbers or after joining found that they had made a mistake and sought to leave the navy as soon as possible.

The sailors complained of the unhealthy conditions in which they lived, confined as they too often were to narrow, damp, and ill-ventilated quarters, while the public cherished the poetic picture of Jack Tars buffeted all day by the sea breezes. Though Fisher had begun to improve their conditions and food, complaints were still raised. And they also complained of the inadequate pay. During the sixty years from 1852 to 1912 their pay had risen from

[1] 'The concentration of the Fleet in home waters whatever its political advantages may be has had a most detrimental effect. So long as a ship is on foreign station the very nature of circumstances causes a bond of union between officers and men which draws them closer together. The fact of their all being foreigners in a foreign land creates in itself a solidarity as nothing else can. With identical interests, sharing one another's work and play, the officers obtain a moral hold over their men such as is impossible in British ports. Here the men's minds naturally incline more to their homes and less to their ships; they are filled with a desire for longer leave and a constant wish to get away to visit their friends and families is the natural result, which the monotony of service in home waters but serves to intensify. Here too they are exposed to the wiles of the Socialist agitator, never backward in working up the molehill of some trumpery grievance into a mountain of discontent and doing his best to imbue them with that class hatred quite foreign to their natures, now so prevalent in England.' (Trafalgar the Soul of the Navy, *National Review*, November 1912, vol. lx, pp. 448 sqq.).

[2] Stephen Reynolds, *The Lower Deck. The Navy and the Nation*, 1912. For the spirit, at once revolutionary and patriotic, which inspired his book see the remarkable conclusion of his preface (p. vii) to which we have already had occasion to refer, p. 412 *n.*

1s. 7d. to 1s. 8d. a day, an increase of 6 per cent. How different during the same period had been the increase of wages for labourers of every description.[1] And when the rise in the cost of living during the last sixty years is taken into account it is evident that the sailors' real pay had seriously fallen. The men demanded nothing less than an increase of 20 per cent. And finally they complained that the discipline was too strict.

It was impossible to turn a deaf ear to these demands at a time when trade was prosperous, unemployment at a minimum, and wages constantly rising and when though the factory had become a dangerous competitor with the man-of-war the demand for seamen was steadily increasing. The men did not indeed secure the increase of a fifth for which they asked. But they obtained an increase of 3d. a day for able seamen and stokers after six years' service,[2] and certain other advantages for seamen of every category which were equivalent to an increase of pay. And Churchill let it be understood that he was trying to obtain further increases from the Exchequer. It was however the question of discipline which most occupied the attention of the Admiralty. Already McKenna had carried a Naval Discipline Bill,[3] which made a distinction between the disgraceful punishment of imprisonment to be inflicted on seamen guilty of crimes against the laws of the land and a new penalty called detention to be inflicted on those guilty only of infringing regulations. In September 1912 Churchill carried out a general reform whose character he explained to the sailors in an official circular.[4] Humiliating forms of punishment which seemed to treat the sailors more like schoolboys than adults were abolished, the guard room officers were empowered to inflict a number of slight punishments without the formality of a report to the Commander, which gave the matter an exaggerated importance, and sailors who considered themselves unjustly sentenced were given the right of appeal. Shortly afterwards it was made impossible to deprive petty officers of their rank with-

[1] *Royal Navy (Pay) Statement showing the Present and New Rates of Pay for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines*, December 4, 1912.

[2] H. of C., March 26, 1913 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1913, 5th Series, vol. I, p. 1778).

[3] 9 Edw. 7, Cap. 41: An Act to enable the punishment of Detention to be substituted for the punishment of Imprisonment for offences against Naval Discipline under the Naval Discipline Act (*Naval Discipline Act*, 1909). It extended to the navy a measure already adopted for the army in 1906.

[4] *Circular Letter dealing with Naval Discipline*, September 7, 1912 (*The Naval Annual*, 1914, pp. 447 sqq.).

out the sentence of a court martial.[1] These concessions did not satisfy the sailors who continued to complain. Neither did they satisfy the Admiralty, which elaborated and even introduced experimentally on certain ships a far-reaching system of reforms designed to render discipline on board ship less harsh, and the Sunday rest more real, and to increase the hours off duty.[2]

The sailors or rather the petty officers complained that they were debarred from the possibility of promotion. And if exceptionally one of their number became an officer, he felt uncomfortable in an alien social sphere in which moreover he could not keep up his position on his pay. On this point Lord Selborne's reforms had amounted to very little;[3] a declaration of principle which had apparently remained a dead letter. As we have seen, Fisher had approached the problem from another angle and he was widely criticized for making the navy a more plutocratic profession than before by increasing the cost of an officer's training. The need of a sufficient number of officers became more pressing every year. Since it took seven years according to the existing rules to turn out an officer, only two to build a Dreadnought, it became urgently necessary to draw officers from a wider class. Churchill reached the Admiralty at the very moment when it was awakening to the urgency of the problem and had just adopted a measure—the first of its kind—to enable common sailors, among the marines for a start, to be promoted as officers.[4] He vigorously prosecuted the new policy. Not only did he shorten the interval required before a midshipman could be made a sub-lieutenant,[5] make it possible for cadets from the public schools to enter the navy directly,[6]

[1] Letter of September 27, 1912 announcing the decision to this effect of *the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty* (*The Times*, September 28, 1912).

[2] For the experiments conducted on board the cruiser *Queen Mary* and the question as a whole see *The Times*, April 2, 1914.

[3] *Navy* (*Personnel*) *Memorandum dealing with the Entry, Training and Employment of Officers of the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines*, December 16, 1902, p. 11.

[4] August 14, 1911. See the article in *The Times* for February 3, 1914, entitled 'Officers for the Navy'.

[5] H. of C., March 18, 1912. Winston Churchill's speech. *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1915, 5th Series, vol. xxxv, p. 1571.)

[6] Disregarding the report of a Committee (H. of C., March 26, 1913, Winston Churchill's speech; *Parl. Deb.*, Commons 1913, 5th Ser., vol. l, p. 1782). See *Navy* (*Education*) *Reports of the Committee appointed to inquire into the Education and Training of Cadets, Midshipmen and Junior Officers of His Majesty's Fleet*, May 18, June 14, September 13, 1912. Also the article in *The Times Educational Supplement* dealing with these reports April 1, 1913, p. 61. Thirty might be accepted in this way every year on passing an examination. See the Admiralty Circular entitled 'Special Entry of the Naval Cadets' in *The Times* for March 6, 1913.

raise the age limit for admission to Osborne,[1] and establish partial scholarships in that college,[2] but he issued two regulations on August 5, 1912, the first of which ordered the selection from the lower ranks of the fleet of a number of men anxious and suitable for promotion, to serve after two or three years' training as commissioned officers, while the second ordered all warrant officers whose conduct had been satisfactory to be promoted after fifteen years' service to the rank of commissioned warrant officer.[3] It remained to solve the more difficult problem of making the social position of an officer who had risen from the ranks tolerable. Everything that could be done to solve it by administrative measures Churchill did. During the period of training future lieutenants who had risen from the ranks would receive additional pay and on promotion as lieutenants a gratuity of £50 to pay for their uniform. The pay of captains, commanders, and lieutenants would be raised.[4] And for the first time in the history of the British navy he made an officer from the ranks a Commander on active service.[5]

Another liberal and humanitarian reform was the abolition of the system of prize money announced by Churchill when he introduced the estimates of March 1914. The Government did not go so far as to abolish the right to capture the private property of enemy subjects on the high seas, as it should have done to conform to the Declaration of London and give full satisfaction to the readers of the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Nation*. But it promised that a future naval war would no longer, so far as the English were concerned, be authorized piracy, and then when British sailors captured a merchant vessel of the enemy they would do so, not in their personal interest, but solely on behalf of the State.[6]

The suggestion of a naval holiday put forward by Churchill for the first time in 1912 and twice repeated in 1913[7] was also inspired by pacific intentions. Both fleets, he proposed, the English

[1] *The Times*, August 6, 1912.
[2] *The Times*, November 24, 1913.
[3] *The Times*, August 6, 1912.
[4] *Royal Navy (Pay) Statement showing the Present and New Rates of Pay for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines*, December 4, 1912, pp. 9–10.
[5] Lieutenant Lyne (Stephen Reynolds, *The Lower Deck*, p. 99).
[6] H. of C., March 17, 1914. Winston Churchill's speech. (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1914, 5th Series, vol. lix, p. 1926.) Churchill declared that he was considering the idea of giving the sailors by way of compensation a special bounty in wartime.
[7] H. of C., March 18, 1912 (Introducing the Navy Estimates; ibid., vol. xxxv, p. 1557). H. of C., March 26, 1913 (Introducing the Navy Estimates; ibid., vol. l, p. 1757). Speech at Manchester, October 18, 1913.

and German should agree to call a year's truce to their battle during which neither would lay down any new capital ships. Since the British naval programme was more extensive than the German, how could the German Government object to a plan which was equally in its own advantage? It objected all the same. It pointed out—and Churchill was obliged to agree[1]—that the example must be followed by other navies, in the first place by the French and Russian. But they would certainly refuse. France was extremely hostile to the suggestion of a naval agreement between England and Germany which would leave the latter free to increase her army. Germany might therefore have been well advised to saddle the French and other *entente* powers with the responsibility of defeating the suggestion. But in fact she entertained towards the suggested naval holiday that instinctive repugnance every powerful nation feels towards any suggestion of disarmament, even reciprocal. The German attitude therefore justified the scepticism expressed by the entire British Press without distinction of party, and entertained by the Admiralty, the Foreign Office and Grey, who thought fit to disavow Churchill's proposal publicly after it had failed. [2]As for Churchill himself it is not easy to guess what he really thought. He was a man of imaginative temperament, a journalist as well as a statesman. And a project of such a journalistic character as the naval holiday may perhaps have made a passing appeal to him.[3] But we must bear in mind that in his *Memoirs* he makes only the briefest allusion to his suggestion of 1912 and 1913. Are we to conclude that while prepared to face the risk of succeeding he was indifferent to the prospect of failure? Possibly his intention in making this dramatic move was to cajole Lloyd George and the champions of disarmament.[4]

[1] H. of C., March 26, 1913 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1913, 5th Series, vol. l, p. 1754).

[2] *Speech at Manchester*, February 3, 1914: 'If you wish to please foreign nations and to get on well with them, do unto them as they would be done by. . . . It is no good making to them appeals which they will not welcome and are not prepared to receive. We have to bear in mind that in a large part of the continent of Europe, at any rate in many great countries of Europe, they still regard their expenditure on armaments as an internal affair and resent as an intrusion demands from any foreign country that their expenditure on armaments should be open to disarmament or arrangement.' Cf. Lord Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty-Five Years, 1892-1916*, vol. i, p. 300. But in this work, written after the war, Grey expresses much more surprise at the German opposition than he appears to have shown in 1913.

[3] Prince von Lichnowsky to Bethmann-Hollweg, April 30, 1913: 'He is thoroughly in earnest about the naval holiday and regards it as undoubtedly practicable.' (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxix, p. 38.)

[4] For the entire episode see, from the German standpoint, *Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxix, pp. 3 sqq.

9

Among the objections to Churchill's proposal which the German Government raised was one we have not yet mentioned. The Germans feared that under the cover of the proposed naval holiday the Admiralty intended to strengthen the British fleet by various underhand methods while pledging themselves not to strengthen it. Of these devices, these indirect methods, something must be said if the reader is to understand how the naval struggle between the two powers continued unabated at the very time when on both sides of the North Sea there was talk of diplomatic conciliation and intellectual *rapprochement*.

The conciliatory formula accepted by Churchill in the spring of 1912 prescribed a 60 per cent superiority for the British fleet (in Dreadnoughts and Post-Dreadnoughts, of course), a superiority very little higher than the 50 per cent formula, three ironclads to two, put forward by Grey at the opening of 1911. It may therefore surprise us to find him in March 1912 demanding as the indispensable condition of maintaining this superiority the construction of two to every one German Dreadnought and thus apparently accepting the formula of two keels to one. But when we reckon up the number of capital ships laid down from the construction of the first English Dreadnought begun in 1905, we find that the English had built thirty Dreadnoughts and Post-Dreadnoughts as against twenty-one German vessels of the same type, that is to say the British superiority was slightly below not the 60 per cent but even the 50 per cent standard. To attain the level of 60 per cent the pace must be speeded up. England must therefore build twenty-five large ironclads as against fourteen German, a ratio of over 17 to 10, almost 18 to 10. But the programme would involve by 1917 the construction of fifty-five capital ships since the introduction of the Dreadnought as against thirty-five German, a ratio of 15.7 to 10, that is something under 60 per cent. The devices to which Churchill and the Admiralty had recourse must be sought elsewhere.

One of these was the deliberate omission by the experts of the British Admiralty when they compared the British and German naval programmes to take into account the respective speed of building in both countries. Boast as Germany might of her industrial progress, in the field of shipbuilding England retained her old

superiority. And if Germany had watched with delight the syndicalist unrest interfere seriously in 1911 with the work of the Clyde shipyards, the crisis once passed, England had made up the time lost. The calculations of the British Admiralty showed, and the results were much the same for other vessels, that the *Orion* had taken two years and one month to construct, the German *Thuringen* three years and three months.[1] That is to say, the ratio between the respective speed of British and German naval construction was two to three. Suppose therefore that in accordance with the rule formulated in 1912 England laid down that year four capital ships whereas Germany laid down two the four English ships would be ready in 1914 but not a single German. Nor was this all. In 1913 and again in 1914 the Admiralty decided to anticipate by eight months the date at which the annual quota of ships, three in 1913, two in 1914, should be laid down.[2] This was more time gained in the armament race with Germany. By doing his utmost to speed up by appropriate subsidies the construction of battleships and by advancing within the year the date when their construction began, Churchill sought to hoodwink, if not experts, at least the general public as to the meaning of the official figures.

Another device was to count as equivalent units all the ironclads posterior to the first Dreadnought. In reality improvement had followed improvement until with the construction of the *Orion* begun in 1911 a standard was reached which was known as the Super-Dreadnought. The speed was the same but the displacement was 23,500 instead of 17,900 tons. The thickness of the main belt armour was now from twelve to eighteen instead of eleven inches. The armament consisted of ten guns of a calibre of 13.5 inches (instead of ten of twelve inches). And if in 1913 England possessed only fourteen Dreadnoughts to eleven German, she had twenty Super-Dreadnoughts built or in process of construction as against only twelve German. The advantage was therefore clearly passing to England. Even before Churchill's arrival at the Admiralty plans had been made by which in March 1914 England would possess twelve capital ships furnished with 13.5 inch guns,

[1] H. of C., February 27, 1912, Winston Churchill's reply to a question by Robert Harcourt (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1912, 5th Series, vol. xxxiv, pp. 1331–2) also H. of C., March 4, 1912, Churchill's reply to Chiozza Money (ibid., vol. xxxv, p. 173–4).

[2] H. of C., June 1913, Churchill's speech (ibid., Commons 1913, vol. liii, pp. 1043–4); March 2, 1914, Churchill's speech (ibid., 1914, vol. lix, pp. 90–1).

while not a single German ironclad would possess a gun with a calibre of more than twelve inches. Would the Admiralty at least be content with the Super-Dreadnought equipped with 13.5 inch guns and the other ironclads built since 1911 which had already attained a displacement of twenty-five thousand tons? Many people believed that the tremendous expense would soon prove intolerable—the latest Super-Dreadnoughts built before 1914 cost £2,250,000—and that the moment was at hand when the torpedo boat and submarine would so revolutionize naval warfare as to render these monster vessels useless. Churchill however trod faithfully in Fisher's steps and laid down in 1913 in the utmost secrecy the formidable vessels of the type represented by the *Queen Elizabeth*. The cost of construction was £3,000,000. The displacement was 27,500 tons; the speed twenty-five instead of twenty-one knots. There were only eight large guns, but they had a calibre of fifteen inches and were able to fire at a single target and over a distance of eleven miles a charge of seven tons, an increase of about a ton over the charge which the *Orion's* ten guns of 13.5 inches could fire.

Evidently in the construction of these monsters the Admiralty was not sacrificing speed to the size of the vessel or its armament. The reason was that all the new English Dreadnoughts were driven by petrol. Given equality of size the use of petrol enormously enhanced the vessel's speed, made it far easier to reach full speed, and refuelling on the open sea a far speedier process, and one requiring fewer hands. The amount of energy derived from petrol was 40 per cent greater than that derived from the same weight of coal. How were the necessary supplies of petrol to be insured? And how was the Government to overcome the opposition of those powerful private interests at home whose profit demanded that the British navy should use coal fuel? And what could be done to prevent the State as a consumer of petrol being held to ransom by the Societies which had a monopoly of the wells? Churchill hit upon the daring plan of making the British Government joint owner of the wells in Southern Persia. He had many difficulties to surmount, deep-rooted prejudices against State ownership, and the suspicion at a juncture when the Marconi scandal was before the public, of a personal interest in the undertaking.[1] Backed however by the report of a parliamentary com-

[1] His real motive however was to free the Admiralty from the pressure of the great oil companies in Mexico and even in the British colony of Trinidad. Moreover, the political

mittee of which he had dared to make Lord Fisher chairman he won the victory. By thus obtaining possession of considerable supplies of petroleum the British State assured her supremacy at sea when that supremacy had become more than ever necessary to protect her free communications with the Persian coast.[1]

10

Moreover, all these calculations were concerned exclusively with Dreadnoughts and Post-Dreadnoughts. For the Admiralty had for the reasons given above adopted that principle in its calculation. But were these reasons so decisive as they were said to be? It is true that ironclads of the pre-Dreadnought types were being superseded and that in consequence of the dramatic innovation constituted by the advent of the Dreadnought it was wise to look forward to the day when they would disappear altogether. But it had not yet arrived. In 1914 England would possess fifty-eight battleships less than twenty years old as against only thirty-five German, and when we compare the battleships of pre-Dreadnought type, England's superiority was overwhelming. There were two ships of the *Lord Nelson* type of 16,500 tons built immediately before the Dreadnoughts and so closely akin to the latter that satisticians could reckon or refuse to reckon them as such, as they wished to prove the strength or the weakness of the British navy. There were eight ships of the *King Edward* type of 16,350 tons, eight of the *Formidable* type of 15,000, six of the *Canopus* type of 12,950 and nine of the *Majestic* type of 14,900 tons. To all these Germany could oppose from the pre-

activities of the Mexican company created diplomatic difficulties with the United States (see Burton J. Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, vol. i, pp. 175 sqq.). And one of its chief shareholders was Lord Murray, one of the politicians involved in the Marconi affair. See the debates H. of C., July 17, 1913 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1913, 5th Series, vol. lvi, pp. 1477, 1561 sqq.).

[1] 4 & 5 Geo. 5, Cap. 37: An Act to provide Money for the purpose of the Acquisition of Share or Loan Capital of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company Limited (*Anglo-Persian Oil Company [Acquisition of Capital] Act*, 1914). By its provisions a sum of £2,200,000 was placed at the disposal of the Treasury and added to the Consolidated Fund. For the Bill see the important debate in the House of Commons on June 17, 1914 (*Parl. Deb.*, Commons 1914, 5th Ser., vol. lxiii, pp. 1131 sqq.). One of the difficulties involved in the substitution of oil for coal in the navy was to placate the coal industry. The Government therefore explained that they intended to conduct experiments in the extraction of petrol from coal. See on the question, *Navy (Oil Fuel) Agreement with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company Limited*, 1914, p. 5.

Dreadnought era only twenty-two ironclads not one of which exceeded 13,000 tons, and which included two old-fashioned little ironclads of the *Hagen* type which displaced no more than 4,000.[1]

If we take further points of comparison and consider the old cruisers, whose type was obsolete but which were still capable of active service, and the light cruisers British superiority was more than double.[2] And the British advantage in submarines both already built and in course of construction was more than double.[3] In 1912 the Admiralty asked Parliament to vote the sums required to maintain a personnel of 137,500 as against the 66,700 sailors of the German fleet. Here again the proportion was more than double and the Admiralty and Churchill were determined to maintain by a progressive increase which would produce in 1920 a total of 230,000 seamen, a ratio far removed from that ratio of 60 per cent with which they professed to be content.

We must add that in her dockyards England was building not only for her own needs but for those of foreign countries. In the event of war it would be easy to commandeer vessels originally destined to fight under a foreign flag which could be transformed in the twinkling of an eye into British men-of-war. In July 1914 four large vessels of respectively 23,000, 27,500, 26,200, and 28,000 tons were being built in British dockyards—two for Turkey, and two for Chile.[4] That is to say, there were four Super-Dreadnoughts which the Admiralty knew were at its disposal which had never formed part of any programme of naval con-

[1] *Fleets (Great Britain and Foreign Countries) Return Showing the Fleets of Great Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Italy, Austria-Hungary, United States of America and Japan, on the 1st day of January, 1914, omitting Battleships, Battle Cruisers and Cruisers, over twenty years old from date of launch and distinguishing, both built and building, Battleships, Battle Cruisers and Cruisers, Light Cruisers, Torpedo Vessels, Torpedo Boat Destroyers, Torpedo Boats and Submarines:—Return to show Date of Launch, Date of Completion, Displacement, Horse-Power, and Armaments reduced to a Common Scale. Admiralty, February 1914.* The publication which began in 1896 and had been annual since 1911 was generally known as the Dickinson Return. Churchill himself warned Germany that England would be satisfied with a superiority of 60 per cent in Dreadnoughts, only so long as the pre-Dreadnoughts remained in commission. (H. of C., March 18, 1912; *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1912, 5th Series, vol. xxxv, p. 1556.)

[2] Cruisers of an old type: 40 British to 9 German. Light Cruisers already finished: 60 British to 43 German, under construction 19 British to 6 German.

[3] Submarines already built: 69 British to 24 German: under construction 27 British to 14 German.

[4] The Russian Government wanted to purchase the two Chilean ironclads, but the Government of Chile refused, pointing out that the British Admiralty possessed a right of pre-emption. (The Russian naval attaché in London, to the Chief of Staff of the Russian navy; Graf. Benckendorff's *Diplomatischer Briefwechsel*, vol. iii, p. 281.)

struction or been counted in any comparison between the German and British navies. Add to this the powerful reserve which the Admiralty possessed in England's immense mercantile marine, large vessels easily transformed into auxiliary cruisers or transports, small vessels which could be employed in a great variety of ways for the defence of the coast. When Germany devoted the new fleet of which she was so proud to a single purpose, to harass England on the seas where admittedly she could not hope to wrest the supremacy from her, she could not have committed herself to a more ungrateful and futile task.

II

Nevertheless, she succeeded in harassing England and the latter to make her position still more secure sought additional strength beyond her borders. She called upon her Colonies for assistance. And she transformed or was preparing to transform her diplomatic *ententes* with France and Russia into naval agreements.

We have already seen how from the date when the first of the Imperial Conferences met, one of the principal aims of the British Government which summoned them was to obtain from the Self-Governing Dominions a contribution, direct or indirect, to imperial defence. As time went on and the German fleet grew the appeal from the Home Government became more pressing. In 1909 a special conference had been summoned devoted exclusively to studying military and naval problems.[1] The aim the Admiralty had in view was clearly explained in the official note which wound up the proceedings of the Conference. The common interest of all parts of the Empire demanded a single fleet under a single command with identical training and discipline for all its crews. All that required to be settled was the proportion in which each colony should contribute to the support and expansion of the British navy.

But it was necessary to take account of the sentiments of local patriotism which had grown up in the Colonies and the desire of every colony to possess a fleet of its own. For a long time Australia

[1] The discussions were private and no reports were published. For the conclusions reached see Asquith's statement H. of C., August 26, 1909 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1909, 5th Series, vol. ix, pp. 2310 sqq.).

had cherished an explicit programme on this point, to which the Imperial Conference of 1903 had made concessions. A compromise suggested by *The Times*, by which Australia and New Zealand would undertake to defray the cost of building and maintaining a special squadron which would be the imperial squadron in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, met with scant success. New Zealand alone formally promised to pay for the construction of a Dreadnought to be placed at the disposal of England for the purposes of imperial defence on condition that England promised in return to send New Zealand a certain number of light vessels for the defence of her shores. Australia would pay the cost of another Dreadnought but it was to form part of the Australian fleet. Canada was even more refractory and the sole result of the conference was to draw up a programme of naval construction as unambitious as possible. A small navy, strictly local, would be built to be divided between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and amounting only to five light cruisers and six torpedo boat destroyers, and even this extremely modest programme remained on paper.

The Conference of 1911 brought the question no further. The utmost the mother country could obtain from her Self-Governing Colonies after lengthy discussions, and when the principle had been admitted that 'the naval forces of the dominions of Canada and Australia would be subject only to the direction of their respective Governments' was that the regulations governing the training and discipline of the crews should be identical with those in force in the mother country, that the officers and men should be 'interchangeable' and that 'in time of war, when the fleets of the dominions, in whole or in part, should have been placed under the authority of the Imperial Government, the vessels would make an integral part of the British fleet and would remain under the direction of the British Admiralty for the whole duration of hostilities'.[1] But in 1912, when Churchill was at the Admiralty, it seemed as though the mother country would succeed at last. The Admiralty had secured from the native chiefs of Malaya the gift of an ironclad. And at the General Election in Canada the Conservative party, under Borden, defeated Laurier and his Liberal followers. Its programme, frankly imperialist, involved the con-

[1] *Imperial Conference 1911. Dominions No. 9. Papers laid before the Imperial Conference: Naval and Military Defence*, p. 2. Resolutions, 1, 2, and 19.

struction of a genuine navy including three battle cruisers of the most modern type.

What use would the Admiralty make of these ironclads or battle cruisers? In the two important speeches he delivered in the House of Commons in March 1913 and in March 1914 to present the navy estimates, Churchill pointed out that the real danger to which the Self-Governing Colonies of America and Australasia were exposed lay in European waters. If England perished, their safety perished with her. He therefore urged the formation of an 'Imperial Squadron' with its base at Gibraltar which should 'cruise freely about the British Empire, visiting the various Dominions, and showing itself ready to operate at any threatened point at home or abroad'.[1] It would consist of the *Malaya*, the *New Zealand* and the three battle cruisers which Canada proposed to build. But Churchill did not despair of witnessing the day when Australia would make her contribution to it. What good purpose could be served by the Dreadnought for which she had decided to pay and which was launched in the summer of 1913, if it remained in Australian waters? It would serve only to flatter Australian vanity. The defence of the coast could be performed equally well by cruisers, torpedo boats, and submarines. And might we not hope that the latest addition to the Dominions, South Africa herself, would one day take her part, when the reconciliation between the two races who had colonized her had been completed, in the perils and glory of the Empire?

This ambitious project disturbed naval experts in Germany. Was this the meaning of the proposals made by Churchill in the House of Commons, and Lord Haldane at Berlin? They had spoken of eight English squadrons to five German, and of a superiority of 60 per cent in Dreadnoughts. Now it was explained that the formula as interpreted by England referred only to the seas of Northern Europe, and excluded the battleships contributed by the Empire.[2] In 1913 and the three following years the British Empire would lay down four ships of the line, the *Malaya* and the three Canadian battle cruisers, over and above the twenty-one whose construction had been officially announced. Six capital

[1] H. of C., March 26, 1913 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1913, 5th Series, vol. l, pp. 1760–3); March 17, 1914 (ibid., 1914, 5th Ser., vol. lix, pp. 1933–5).

[2] Despatch from the Capitain de fregate de Saint-Seine, French naval attaché in London, quoted by Lieutenant-Colonel de La Panouse, military attaché in a letter to Millerand, Minister for War, June 24, 1912 (*Documents diplomatiques français*, 3e Série, vol. iii, p. 164).

ships would thus be built in 1913 to three German, five to two in 1914 and 1915, five to three in 1916 and four to two in 1917. That is to say, during the six years from 1912 to 1917 England would build twenty-nine ships instead of twenty-five as against fourteen German—more than double. Germany had good reason to declare herself duped.

Her anxiety was dispelled by a new revolt of local patriotism. In 1913 Borden was unable to obtain the consent of the Ottawa Parliament to the first instalment of his naval programme and though he expressed his intention to persist with his plan and fight the Liberal opposition, he was not very likely to find future conditions more favourable than on the morrow of his triumph at the polls in 1912. In Australia the Ministry of Defence protested that Churchill's plan amounted to a repudiation of the agreement of 1909. The Dreadnought had been built as part of an exclusively Australian fleet. If the First Lord of the Admiralty was right in suggesting that vessels of this type were useless in the Pacific, Australia ought not to build them. Even loyal New Zealand complained. England, while incorporating the *New Zealand* in her imperial navy, had not given her colony the two light cruisers and the submarines she had promised in 1909. If she did not keep her promise within a year New Zealand would build a cruiser at her own cost, but it would be stationed in home waters. In short, England must content herself, for the present at least, with only two vessels to reinforce her imperial navy, the *New Zealand* and the *Malaya*. Churchill, disappointed in this direction, was driven back upon the expedient of which we have already spoken to advance the date every year when the construction of the new vessels was put in hand.

12

There were indeed imperialists to whom it was repugnant to depend upon the colonies for the security of the United Kingdom. How much more repugnant it must have been to them to see England seeking help, not from these young nations who were after all British, but from foreign nations so lately her military and naval rivals.

The Admiralty no doubt acted prudently when they allied themselves with the French navy against the German. For Germany

dominated the Triple Alliance. In obedience to her instructions, Austria was beginning to build Dreadnoughts and these could hardly be left out of account in a calculation of the forces Germany could employ against England in the event of war. Italy was also building them and though the Italian fleet was probably intended to combat Austria rather than her enemies, and though it was most unlikely that Italy would ever take part against England in a naval war between Austria and the latter, the fact remained that Italy like Austria was Germany's ally. England must therefore put forward a still greater effort or trust to France to guard the Mediterranean. The surprising thing is indeed that the Admiralty waited till 1911 before deciding upon a naval understanding with France, though the two armies had been collaborating for the past five years. The explanation is that the British army, taught humility by the disillusionments of the Boer War, was forced to admit that although the German army was far stronger than the French, the British had much to learn from the latter, whereas the contempt for the French navy entertained for many years by the British prevented the latter from entertaining the idea of concerted action. The Agadir crisis in August 1911 brought home to the British Government the danger involved by this attitude of haughty isolation adopted by the Admiralty. When Churchill succeeded McKenna he determined to inaugurate a new policy. A month had not passed before the English authorities made overtures to the French naval attaché,[1] and since the French Government soon passed into the control of a statesman who, reversing his predecessor's policy, was anxious to tighten the *entente* with England, the understanding between the two armies was soon completed by an understanding between the two navies.

When he introduced the navy estimates on March 18, 1912, Churchill announced his intention to redistribute the squadrons charged with the defence of the United Kingdom.[2] In future there would be three fleets comprising in all eight squadrons of eight battleships each. The first of these, four battle squadrons of Dreadnoughts, would be kept permanently on active service,

[1] Capitain de fregate Le Gouz de Saint-Seine, naval attaché in London, to Delcassé, Minister of Marine, December 11, 1911 (*Documents diplomatiques français*, 3e Série, vol. i, p. 328).

[2] H. of C., March 18, 1912 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1912, 5th Series, vol. xxxv, pp. 1564 sqq.).

ready for action without any previous mobilization. The second consisting of two squadrons, also on active service, would nevertheless be obliged in the event of war to visit the bases of its units to obtain supplementary crews. The third, also consisting of two squadrons, would be a reserve fleet, but a special reserve would be formed to man it, the 'immediate reserve', which could be called up in advance of a general mobilization.

These measures were a direct reply to the new German naval law. Germany was increasing the number of her permanently mobilized ships. England would follow suit. But to form the 'first fleet' the 'Atlantic fleet' must be withdrawn from its base at Gibraltar for which English ports would be substituted. The 'Mediterranean fleet', now the fourth fleet, would take its place at Gibraltar, leaving the Mediterranean without English capital ships. The step intensified the concentration of the British navy, which in response to the pressure of the German navy was withdrawing it from the extremities to the centre of the Empire. Did this mean that British interests in the Mediterranean would be left unprotected? Or would England count upon the French fleet to protect the common interests of the *entente*? Was not the purpose of Asquith's visit to Malta in May to discuss this question with Fisher, who came from his Italian villa, and Kitchener, who came from Egypt to meet him? Were not the journalists who at this moment were advocating the transformation of the *entente* into an alliance in the councils of the Foreign Office and the Admiralty? What truth was there in the rumour, current in August, of negotiations between England and France for a naval *entente*? The answer to these questions seemed to have been given in September when it was announced that six ironclads of the third French squadron had been transferred from Brest to Toulon to form, together with the vessels already stationed in the latter port, a single fleet of eighteen ironclads and six armoured cruisers. It was not a powerful fleet; there were no Dreadnoughts. But it was sufficiently strong to counterbalance the combined fleets of Austria and Italy, supposing the latter were allied, for like France neither of these powers had as yet completed a Dreadnought. Thus France assumed before the whole world the task of protecting against possible attacks by the allies of Germany the route to India between Gibraltar and Port Said, now stripped of English capital ships. On the other hand England made herself responsible for the

defence of the French coast on the North Sea, the Channel, and even the Atlantic, henceforward devoid of French ironclads.

Rumour had spoken the truth; a naval convention was being negotiated between the two Powers. Negotiations had in fact been begun at the beginning of September 1911 to prepare for the danger which many regarded as imminent, of war between the three Western Powers and a verbal agreement had been reached as to the respective spheres of action to be allotted to the British and French fleets in the event of hostilities.[1] They were revived on the basis of the new distribution of the British squadrons in July 1912. At first Churchill, not to commit the Foreign Office, asked for an explicit declaration in the preamble that the agreement should be operative only if Great Britain and France were actually engaged in conducting a joint war and should not restrict the political freedom of each Government to participate or not to participate in such a war.[2] When the technical agreements were concluded in January and February 1913 they bound the contracting parties only to take the necessary steps for co-operation in the Mediterranean or elsewhere 'in the event of a war in which Great Britain and France are allied against the Triple Alliance' and to defend the Straits of Dover and the Channel 'in the event of being allied with the French Government in a war with Germany'. It was onto these naval negotiations that Paul Cambon grafted the diplomatic negotiations which ended in the exchange of notes in October. Thus little more than a year after Agadir the diplomatic *entente* was committed for the first time to writing, the military understanding ratified for the first time by the Cabinet and, most significant of all, the diplomatic and military agreements completed by a naval agreement.

The naval agreement was and remained secret, but the new distribution of the British and French fleets could not be concealed and it caused considerable dissatisfaction in England. Churchill was attacked by a formidable combination of critics.

[1] Capitain de fregate Le Gouz de Saint-Seine to Delcassé, Minister of Marine, July 10, 1912 (*Documents diplomatiques français*, 3e Série vol. iii, pp. 235–6. Cf. vol. i, p. 328 *n.*).

[2] Capitain de fregate Le Gouz de Saint-Seine to Delcassé, July 10 and 18 (*Documents diplomatiques français*, 3e Série, vol. iii, pp. 235, 270). Delcassé to Poincaré, September 17, 1912, letter enclosing a preliminary draft of a naval convention with notes (ibid., pp. 506 sqq.); Paul Cambon to Poincaré, September 19, 1912 (ibid., pp. 523 sqq.). Poincaré to Paul Cambon, September 20, 1912 (ibid., p. 530). Capitain de fregate Le Gouz de Saint-Seine to Vice-Admiral Aubert, September 21, 1912 (ibid., p. 546). (*Documents diplomatiques français*, vol. v, pp. 486, 490.)

The imperialists disliked entrusting the Mediterranean communications of the Empire to the protection of a foreign Power.[1] The pacifists objected to the British fleet taking charge of the French coast of the Channel as involving the subordination of British policy to the French Foreign Office. To disarm his critics Churchill promised in July 1912 to send to Malta four cruisers of the *Invincible* type to compensate for the departure of the fourth fleet, transferred a month before to Gibraltar. And it was no doubt to dispel the same misgivings that a little later he contemplated the formation of an imperial squadron, with its base at Gibraltar, which would release five Dreadnoughts for the Mediterranean. When the project failed, he despatched to the Mediterranean in November 1913[2] a division of the first squadron, four Dreadnoughts, and a division of the third squadron of cruisers, four large armoured cruisers, to take part in joint manœuvres with the Mediterranean fleet. Finally, on March 17, 1914, when he introduced the annual navy estimates he explained that the acceleration effected in building the three Super-Dreadnoughts laid down in 1913-14 would enable the Admiralty by the end of 1915 to send to Malta a squadron of eight battleships, of which at least six would be Dreadnoughts to replace the four battle cruisers stationed there in 1912.[3] The imperialists were satisfied; British prestige in the Mediterranean was secure. But nothing had been done to reassure the pacifists, the opponents of any intervention in a European war. The defence of the north coast of France was in fact entrusted to the British fleet, and so great was the naval weakness of France, that just because it obliged her to entrust her safety to British aid, it was her surest guarantee that that aid would not be withheld.

13

When the negotiations for a naval convention between England and France opened in July 1912, a naval convention between France and Russia had just been concluded. France adopted a

[1] See Lord Esher's essay entitled 'Naval and Military Situation' in his book, *The Influence of King Edward and Other Essays*, 1915. At the Malta Conference in May 1912, Kitchener had expressed himself strongly against abandoning the Mediterranean to the French fleet. (Sir George Arthur, *Life of Lord Kitchener*, 1920, vol. ii, p. 336.)

[2] H. of C., July 22, 1914 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1914; 5th Series, vol. xli, p. 855).

[3] H. of C., March 17, 1914 (ibid., 1912, 5th Ser., vol. lix, p. 1929).

programme of naval construction which would at last give her Dreadnoughts and produce by 1920 a fleet of twenty-eight large ironclads. The Russian Government, confident that it had overcome the danger of revolution, was actively engaged in creating a new navy, since her old navy had been practically annihilated by Japan. Four Super-Dreadnoughts had already been launched and the Duma had just sanctioned the construction of three more large ironclads and four battle cruisers. The German Government hoped, it would seem, to alarm England by calling her attention to the danger she might one day incur from these French and Russian armaments. In 1914 Tirpitz was careful not even to allude to the naval power of Britain and to justify the naval expenditure of his country as her inevitable reply to the expenditure of France and Russia. England however did not regard with disfavour the understanding between the Russian and French navies and the reinforcement of both. If Germany were challenged in the Baltic, France stronger in the Mediterranean, England would be freer to meet the German menace in the North Sea. When, therefore, in April 1914, King George visited Paris, accompanied by Grey, whose presence invested the visit with an exceptional importance,[1] the French Prime Minister, at the suggestion of the Czar, asked the English Government to empower the Admiralty to negotiate with the Russian naval authorities an agreement similar to that concluded between France and Russia in 1912, and between France and England in 1913. Grey, whom the Czar had already approached directly,[2] made no objection.

Conversations took place in London at the beginning of May between Grey, Benckendorff, Paul Cambon, and Isvolsky, who had come from Paris for the purpose. Subsequently Grey would seem to have followed the procedure he had inaugurated in 1906 and left the Admiralty a free hand to conduct negotiations in

[1] Valuable information about this visit will be found in the Austrian diplomatic documents. Despatch from their councillor to the legation Count Karl Trauttmansdorff, London, April 24, 1914. Report from the Ambassador Mensdorff, May 8, 1914; *Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. vii, p. 1085; vol. viii, pp. 21–2. With the approval of the Foreign Office *The Times* invited the French historian Ernest Lavisse to write an article on the occasion of the King's visit celebrating the *entente cordiale* which this very month of April had reached its tenth anniversary. But when *The Times* asked Arthur Balfour, the Prime Minister of 1909 and Lord Lansdowne his Foreign Secretary to supplement the French by an English article, they refused, disapproving it would seem of the excessive importance which *The Times* and, indirectly, the Foreign Office attributed to the royal visit. (H. Wickham Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, vol. i, pp. 388 sqq.)

[2] For the conversation on April 3 between the Czar and Sir George Buchanan see Sir George Buchanan, *My Mission to Russia*, vol. i, p. 183.

which from that moment he took no further part.[1] When indiscretions were committed at Petersburg, the German Press denounced these suspicious conversations, the Radical Press took alarm and a question was asked in Parliament. Grey gave the stereotyped answer: 'If war arose between European powers, there were no unpublished agreements which would restrict or hamper the freedom of the Government or of Parliament to decide whether or not Great Britain should participate in a war. That answer . . . remains as true to-day as it was a year ago. No negotiations have since been concluded with any Power that would make the statement less true. No such negotiations are in progress, and none are likely to be entered upon, so far as I can judge.'[2] There was not a word in the reply which was not literally true. The accuracy of the semi-official statement published in the *Westminster Gazette* that 'there is no naval agreement, nor any negotiations with a view to a naval agreement, between Great Britain and Russia',[3] was more dubious. The statement was certainly true, if it meant that in consequence of the awkward revelations the negotiations had been suspended. At the moment when the article in the *Westminster Gazette* appeared they were not in progress. But it had been decided it would seem that they should be renewed in August under conditions of greater secrecy when Prince Louis of Battenberg, at once a Prince of the blood royal and a Sea Lord, was expected to visit Petersburg.[4]

British policy during the two years preceding the war was marked by curious inconsistencies. On the one hand the Government wished to remain free, and perhaps genuinely believed itself free, to intervene or not to intervene in an eventual war. To preserve this liberty it had attempted a policy of *rapprochement* with Germany, which it regarded as consistent with the *ententes* with

[1] Lord Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty-Five Years*, vol. i, pp. 284–5.

[2] H. of C., June 11, 1914 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1914, 5th Series, vol. lxiii, p. 458).

[3] *Westminster Gazette*, June 13, 1914.

[4] Count Benckendorff to Sazonov, May 20, June 2, 1914 (*Un Livre Noir*, vol. ii, pp. 324 sqq.). Secret report by Captain Wolkoff, Russian naval attaché in London, May 24, June 6, 1914. (Graf Benckendorff's *Diplomatischer Briefwechsel*, Ed. 1928, vol. iii, pp. 281–2) Count Benckendorff to Sazonov, May 29, June 11, 1914 (*Un Livre Noir*, vol. ii, p. 326, *Der diplomatische Briefwechsel Iswolskys*, vol. iv, p. 133). Count Benckendorff to Sazonov, June 19, July 2, 1914 (Graf Benckendorff's *Diplomatischer Briefwechsel*, Ed. 1928, vol. iii, pp. 281–2). Sir Edward Grey's despatch to Sir George Buchanan of June 25, 1914 is not the denial which it appears at first sight. Grey simply protests against the report that a convention had been actually concluded and that it comprised an agreement on the question of the Dardanelles. (*British Documents* . . . vol. xi, p. 6.)

France and Russia. On the other hand it strengthened the defences of the Empire, and with this object sought to achieve a closer co-operation with the Colonies, France, and Russia, measures which had no meaning apart from the eventuality of an armed struggle between England and Germany. But the paradox of this double-edged policy did but accentuate, say if you like caricature, the paradox of that European system it had become customary to term armed peace.

To confine ourselves to the two rival nations with which we are particularly concerned here, we observe that the military and naval expenditure of Great Britain had more than doubled between 1895, the year in which the imperialists came into power and 1913 when the Liberals had held office for eight years. In Germany during the same period they had been quadrupled and on the eve of the Great War exceeded the British figure by £21,000,000, more than a fifth. In an extremely pessimistic speech in which, while calling attention to the evil he avowed himself at a loss for a remedy, Lloyd George estimated at £40,000,000 the annual increase in the world's expenditure on armaments. It is not surprising that this ruinous competition terrified those who retained sufficient independence of judgment not to be swept away by the tide. In the United States the head of the Government, President Wilson, who in consequence of the geographical position of his country could adopt towards the affairs of Europe the attitude of an impartial umpire, took alarm. When at the close of 1913 Sir William Tyrell, Grey's private secretary, visited Washington to discuss grave questions outstanding between England and the United States, which he settled to the satisfaction of both countries, the suggestion took shape of an unofficial mission to be undertaken by Colonel House to the rulers of the great European Powers with the object of devising some safeguard against the danger of war. An alliance between England and the United States, an alliance between England, the United States, and Germany, an organized *entente* of all the great Powers, were the various projects which entertained the dreams of Anglo-Saxon politicians and formed the subject of their confidential discussions until late in July, at the very time when the British Admiralty was negotiating or preparing to negotiate with Russia.[1]

[1] *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House* arranged as a Narrative by Colonel Seymour, vol. i, pp. 266 sqq. See especially for the rigorous secrecy with which the conversations

But by the end of May, Colonel House had lost heart. 'The situation is extraordinary,' he wrote from Berlin. 'It is militarism run stark mad. Unless someone acting for you can bring about a different understanding, there is some day to be an awful cataclysm. No one in Europe can do it. There is too much hatred, too many jealousies.'[1] Nevertheless, if we consider only the Western nations of Europe it is by no means so clear that the imminent war was the natural consequence of the system of armed peace, as it had been in operation for many years past.

The cost was ruinous. But can one purchase too dearly the blessings of peace? And many competent thinkers regarded a democratic system which enfranchised the masses and imposed military service on the wealthy as favourable to peace and stable international relations. In support of their contention they could appeal to the fact that the host of diplomatic conflicts, between England and France, England and Germany, and France and Germany, which during the last forty years had seemed to place the nations on the brink of armed conflict, had never led to war. One of the two parties had given way or a compromise had been arranged. Bloodshed had been avoided. Why should it be different in 1913 or 1914? There was no issue likely to provoke a direct conflict between England and Germany. War between the two countries could arise only from a war between Germany and a third Power. From a war with France? What matter of dispute between the two nations could be foreseen, sufficiently serious to lead to war? Morocco? A considerable section of German opinion had not renounced the hope that Germany would regain a footing in that country. But the German Government would certainly not be so foolish as to strengthen the *entente* between France and England by another Tangier or Agadir at a time when its chief anxiety was to consolidate its position in Europe by allaying British mistrust. Alsace? The issue had been revived in some quarters both in Paris and in Alsace itself. But what French Cabinet would undertake the responsibility of a war of revenge? The politicians knew that nothing was more remote from the

were conducted House's conversation with Tyrell: 'Tyrell brought word to me to-day that Sir Edward said he did not wish to send anything official or in writing, for fear of offending French and Russian sensibilities in the event it should become known. He thought that it was one of those things that had best be done informally and unofficially.' (Colonel House to President Wilson, July 3, 1914; vol. i, p. 277.)

[1] *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, vol. i, p. 255. Cf. Burton J. Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, vol. i, pp. 270 sqq.

thoughts of the country as a whole, and it was fear of a German attack not the desire to undertake a war of aggression which had won the nation's consent to a reinforcement of the army. They also knew that France unaided was too weak to sustain a war with Germany and that they could not count on British aid in a war of this kind. Indeed, they were aware that to raise the question of Alsace would be the surest way to alienate British sympathies. In pontifical tones *The Times*, an organ by no means unfriendly to France, had solemnly warned the French against the consequences of such imprudence. 'If the French people cannot help thinking of it, they should bear Gambetta's counsel in mind, and keep their thoughts to themselves.'[1]

If, nevertheless, the danger of war became serious about the beginning of 1914, it was for reasons, though many Frenchmen and Englishmen were not aware of the fact, which had nothing to do with problems of western politics. It was the result of a sudden change in the relations between Germany and Russia. In spite of the Franco-Russian alliance, the *rapprochement* between Russia and England, and the formation of the Triple Entente they were as we have seen still good, when the storm kindled by the episode of Bosnia had blown over, and continued to be good until after Agadir. They suddenly became very bad at the close of 1912 and the German Staff could never have wrested from the Government and the Reichstag the army law of 1913, which made the European war inevitable, if the diplomatic situation in Eastern Europe had not aroused with good reason a host of new anxieties in Berlin. Was the Russian or the German Government responsible for these new risks of war? The Governments themselves still desired peace. Not individuals or governments but the collective passions of the masses must bear the responsibility. In their own despite the Governments were pushed forward by their subjects' irresistible pressure. To understand the chain of events which led England on August 4, 1914, to declare war on Germany we must acquaint ourselves with the nature and origins of these currents of popular feeling which from Asia to the Balkans, from the Balkans to the southern frontier of Germany, swept onward from struggle to struggle, from one national revolution to another until they had submerged the West in the deluge of war.

[1] March 3, 1913.

II THE EAST AND THE PRINCIPLE OF NATIONALITY

I

We have already had occasion at the beginning of this volume to comment upon the important part in human history played by the victory of Japan over Russia in 1905. It was an example to the whole of Asia, indeed to all those races which Europe had branded as permanently inferior. There was however a fundamental distinction between Japan and the other Asiatic civilizations. Under its theocratic and feudal monarchy Japan had successfully resisted all the attempts of the Western Powers to establish themselves in her territory. Elsewhere the situation was completely different. Everywhere else the native monarchies and aristocracies had been conquered or corrupted and had allowed their dominions to be more or less completely annexed. If, therefore, the Asiatic peoples were to throw off the yoke of the West, their liberation must begin by a revolt against their own Governments —and the watchword of revolt had been taught by the West. In the nineteenth century the principle of nationality had changed the face of Europe. That principle demanded that national independence should be achieved by political autonomy, democratic parliamentary government, and universal suffrage. It no longer enjoyed its former credit in the West, where since parliamentary democracy had been established universally, other problems aroused popular enthusiasm and Socialism was gaining ground at the expense of Nationalism. But it had now taken hold of Asia, which it would completely revolutionize.

Of China in the first place. A revolt against foreign penetration and the Manchu dynasty had already followed the Japanese victories of 1895, when everyone expected China to be partitioned between the Western Powers and Japan. The movement redoubled its strength as a result of the Japanese victory of 1905. In 1906 an edict was published promising political reforms, and shortly afterwards a constitution was drawn up by which the Emperor would share the government with a representative, if not a democratic, assembly. In 1908, after the mysterious deaths within two days' interval of the Emperor and the dowager Empress and the accession to the throne of an infant of three,

changes followed rapidly and assumed a revolutionary complexion. In 1911 the Emperor granted the assembly a responsible Cabinet. But when a rebellion broke out on the Yang-Tsé-Kiang it was only partially suppressed by the Prime Minister, Yuan-Shi-Kai, an armistice was concluded with the rebels, and the Emperor abdicated having first set up a provincial Government to administer the country until the meeting of the Convention, which in 1912 proclaimed a Republic. Had Republicanism conquered or been defeated? A year later Yuan-Shi-Kai made himself dictator and his Government displayed the same vices which had discredited the former Imperial Government. But this did not alter the enormous significance of a revolution which had overthrown the oldest of the great military monarchies.

The Chinese revolution proved detrimental to British influence. The control of the Chinese customs which England had exercised for the last fifty years was disputed and diminished, and if she succeeded in obtaining for one of her subjects the control of the duty on salt she renounced by a formal declaration her right, accepted without question hitherto, to audit the balance sheet of the railways built with British capital. Nor was it only the Chinese who extorted concessions from England in China. It was all very well for the new Chinese Governments to charge the former Imperial Government with weakness—they were weaker still. And although a consortium of the four Great Powers had been established to harmonize their respective economic ambitions, the struggle for concessions, the scramble for Chinese spoils recommenced. An agreement between Russia and Japan compelled the English and Americans to retreat from Manchuria. France secured concessions in the south-west. And since Germany was intriguing against England on the Yang-Tsé-Kiang and England needed, not only in China but elsewhere, the diplomatic support of Russia, Japan, and France, her diplomacy was obviously faced with a checkmate. Under these circumstances it might have expected the support of the United States. For in many respects American policy in China was identical with British and it was in concert with America that in 1902 England had persuaded the Powers to proclaim the principle of the open door in China. But how much was left of that principle by 1914? And what weapons were at the disposal of the two great English-speaking nations to enforce it? The American Government was opposed to any kind of

military intervention. And the British was compelled by the pressure of the German navy to withdraw gradually all its ships from Chinese waters.[1]

Meanwhile the revolt of China was spreading and provoking outside the country a far more direct opposition to British imperialism. We have seen how in India the Indian Councils Bill of 1909 had inaugurated an era of concessions to Hindu nationalism. But would the Nationalists be content with what was obviously a mere instalment? They made use of the elective element thus introduced into the provincial legislative councils to render British administration difficult throughout the entire country. And they made their way into the branches of the Civil Service. Moreover violent agitation continued. There were assassinations and bomb throwing. England hoped to strike an effective blow by despatching King George and the Queen to preside in person at the solemn Durbar, which inaugurated at Delhi the new capital of British India. The royal visit would, it was believed, endear the monarch to his Indian subjects and give a sentimental consecration to Hindu loyalty. The Hindu reply to this theatrical demonstration was the outrage committed a year later, on December 23, 1912, in this very city of Delhi. The Viceroy, Lord Hardinge was seriously wounded by a revolutionary, who successfully made his escape. England was clearly faced with a problem of extraordinary difficulty. 'The English', wrote a contemporary sadly, 'are interested in this problem. But they are also tolerably anxious and they make the mistake of letting this anxiety be seen.'[2]

We have seen how in Egypt the 'Young-Egyptian' movement cast a cloud over the final period of Lord Cromer's administration. The administration of his successor, Sir Eldon Gorst, coincided with years of economic depression, financial difficulties, and a nationalist agitation amounting to rebellion. Sir Eldon continued his predecessor's methods, though in consequence of the assassination of the Prime Minister and the discovery of a plot against his own life and the Khedive's he found himself obliged to enforce the Press laws more stringently than hitherto. He extended local self-government, giving greater powers, particularly in the matter of education, to the provincial councils. But he firmly

[1] For the situation in China on the eve of the War see an excellent article by J. O. P. Bland entitled 'The Future of China' (*Edinburgh Review*, October 1914, No. 450, pp. 427 sqq.).

[2] India and the English (*Round Table*, November 15, 1910; vol. i, No. 1, p. 45).

refused to introduce anything in the nature of a representative parliament. The first concessions to the Young-Egypt party were made by Kitchener, who succeeded Eldon in 1911. While taking energetic measures to improve the economic situation of the *fellahin* and attempting without success to solve the problem of the mixed tribunals, he drew up a constitution which was published in 1913. The Legislative Council and General Assembly were superseded by a single body, the 'Legislative Assembly,' composed of eighty-nine members of whom sixty-six were elected. It would have the right to initiate legislation, which the council of ministers could veto for reasons stated. Moreover the council would be obliged to submit any measure of legislation it thought desirable to the assembly, on which the new constitution conferred a suspensive veto. Only the civil list and foreign policy would be entirely excluded from its control. It would be elected indirectly by universal suffrage. In a document explaining the principles of the reform the hope was expressed that it would educate politically the native population and 'little by little' enable it to secure from its legislature 'a faithful representation of its interests'.[1]

2

In Persia the revolt of Asia assumed the same form as everywhere else. To strip of his power a sovereign whom they accused of being in the pay of Russia, the Nationalists of Teheran demanded a democratic constitution, an assembly elected by universal suffrage, and a responsible Government. They could count upon the sympathy of England, so that in Persia the same phenomenon could be witnessed which had occurred so often in other countries during the past century, a pre-established harmony between British interests and the cause of liberty. Twice during the year 1906 several thousand of the population of Teheran encamped on the huge piece of ground which was the property of the British legation, and obtained by this gesture of passive protest first the

[1] Report for year 1913. Sidney Low, *Egypt in Transition* with an Introduction by the Earl of Cromer, 1914, pp. 230 sqq. Sir George Arthur, *Life of Lord Kitchener*, 1920, vol. ii, especially for the constitutional question, pp. 330 sqq. The account is far from clear but makes it plain that when he granted Egypt a 'Legislative Assembly' Kitchener had no intention of fostering the growth of a genuine system of parliamentary government in Egypt.

grant of a constitution by the Shah, then an actual election. But at this juncture the Anglo-Russian Convention of August 31, 1907, was concluded. The Convention brought into line the policy of the two empires in Asia and particularly in Persia. While affirming the 'integrity and independence of Persia', it recognized Russia's 'special interest' in the northern portion of the country, which included Teheran, and the meaning of the phrase, as employed by European diplomacy, is obvious. England was therefore obliged by the pact of 1907 to betray at Teheran the Nationalist party, which had become accustomed to regard itself as the English party. The problem became even more difficult when, in 1910, Isvolsky, who had negotiated on behalf of Russia the agreement of 1907, was succeeded as Foreign Minister by Sazonov, who was far less friendly to England.

The Shah, driven from Teheran by a revolt, fled to Russian territory where he continued his intrigues. He was replaced on the throne by a child of twelve, a tool of the Assembly. But a Russian army occupied Tabriz and kept the capital under the constant threat of armed intervention. The Nationalist Government placed an American named Shuster in control of the Persian finances. He constituted himself the whole-hearted champion of the pro-British as against the pro-Russian party. At the very moment of the Agadir crisis when Russia was openly betraying her Western friends and allies but when it was more than ever necessary to avoid quarrelling with her, Shuster appointed Englishmen to the most important posts in the government departments—that is to say, in the very zone in which the Convention of 1907 admitted Russia's special interest, since it included Teheran. The Russian Government protested and the British was obliged to recognize that the protest was justified. The Government of Teheran dismissed Shuster and shortly afterwards was overthrown by a Russian army. The Shah was restored to his throne with despotic authority. Then Russia increased her demands. She proposed a partition of the zone hitherto left neutral between the British and Russian zones, and spoke of a trans-Persian railway to run through Teheran from the Caspian to the Persian Gulf. The British Government, its hands tied as they were by the necessities of its general policy, found itself in a humiliating position, powerless to oppose openly these projects of Russian expansion. The English opponents of Grey's policy were furnished with an excellent

ground of attack. The advanced Liberals, foes of the Anglo-Russian *entente* and champions of a *rapprochement* with Germany, found powerful allies among the imperialists, particularly those who took a special interest in India and the Middle East. They had always regarded the Convention of 1907 as too favourable to Russia. Now they saw the Mohammedans of India, England's most certain allies against an eventual rising of the Hindus, denouncing the crime committed by the Foreign Office in abandoning Teheran, one of the last remaining Moslem capitals, to Russian rule. It was therefore a formidable attack, for it kept up an incessant fire and was conducted on two fronts by Arthur Ponsonby on one side, by Lord Curzon on the other, which Grey had to face when he defended his Persian policy as best he could, whether in the Press or in Parliament.[1]

These anxieties however, serious though they were, were nothing in comparison with those caused by events nearer home. For the revolt of Asia had reached Turkey and not only Turkey in Asia but Turkey in Europe and had kindled in the Balkans a conflagration destined shortly to spread until it had set the whole of Europe on fire.

It was in July 1908 that the 'Young-Turk' movement broke out at Salonika. On July 23 two army corps revolted and the following day Abdul Hamid capitulated. The conspirators had no need, as in Persia or China, to construct a completely new constitution. It was sufficient to restore the constitution of 1876 based on indirect election by universal suffrage, which the Sultan had abolished thirty years before. Once reorganized, the Ottoman Empire, as we have already had occasion to point out, would confront Europe not as a State formed by the subjection of several conquered people to a conquering race, but as a State of the Western type, in which the entire population, without distinction of race, language, or creed would consist of Turkish citizens on an equal footing. And for this very reason there could no longer be any ground for the constant interference of the great Christian powers in 'the domestic affairs of Turkey'. Turkey would no longer be humiliated in the person of her Sultan. The national honour had been saved by the accession to power of the 'Jacobins', the Young Turks.

The hope was disappointed. Three months after the Young-

[1] For the events in Persia see Edward G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*, 1920 and W. Morgan Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia, a Record of European Diplomacy*, 1912.

Turk revolution Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. Three years later Italy occupied the coast of Tripoli. The disintegration of Turkey followed. It is susceptible of two alternative explanations.

The first of these attributes the overthrow of Turkish authority in the Balkans to the intrigues of the great powers. The war between Turkey and Italy dragged on. Fear of losing face prevented the young Turks from making peace. The Italian Ambassador in Paris, Tittoni, entered into conversations with Isvolsky, now Russian Ambassador to France, who wanted to avenge the humiliation inflicted upon him by Austria and Germany in 1909 by a further attempt to establish Russian hegemony over the Dardanelles. Why not provoke a rising of the Eastern Christians against Turkey, a joint attack upon her by the Balkan powers? Under Isvolsky's auspices an alliance was concluded between Serbia and Bulgaria, the germ of the triple alliance of the Serbs, Bulgars, and Greeks. When this war or revolution broke out, Turkey would be compelled to abandon the last remnants of her African dominions to Italy, and Russia would make use of the opportunity to secure a free passage of the Dardanelles for her warships, possibly to effect a military occupation of Constantinople.

We do not believe that diplomacy exercises such power over human affairs. It is by internal causes that we explain the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. No diplomatic intrigue provoked the rebellion of the Assyrians, the Arabs in Asia, and the Albanians in Europe against the Young Turks.[1] When the Young Turks surrendered to the Albanians and granted them a measure of autonomy the Macedonian Christians inevitably demanded the same concessions. The very fact of the Young-Turk revolution gave such impetus to the movement for emancipation that for a time the enmity between Serbs, Bulgars, and Greeks was forgotten. The Russian diplomats witnessed rather than inspired the alliance between Bulgaria and Serbia,[2] and if they deemed it advisable to take the movement under their patronage, they were soon dis-

[1] If in the case of Albania intrigue played a part it was Austrian. See De Saint-Aulaire to Raymond Poincaré, January 18, 1912; Krajewski to Raymond Poincaré, January 22, 1912 (*Documents diplomatiques français . . .* 3e Série, vol. i, pp. 496–7, 518–20). Duchesne to Raymond Poincaré, August 4, 1912 (*Documents diplomatiques français . . .* 3e Série, vol. iii, pp. 321–2).

[2] Bompard to Raymond Poincaré, August 4, 1912 (ibid., p. 320). Laroche to Briand, August 20, 1912 (ibid., p. 377). Bompard to Raymond Poincaré, September 21, 1912 (ibid., p. 547).

mayed by the violent passions unloosed at Sofia and Belgrade. In any case no Russian or Italian action had anything to do with the *rapprochement* between Greece and Bulgaria, and Greece and Serbia. If any foreign influences were at work here they were British, official or private.[1] To overthrow Abdul Hamid, the Young Turks had appealed to the principle of nationality. That revolutionary principle was now being turned against themselves. What would be the issue of the conflict? Turkey was certainly weak, but the prestige of her army stood high. Europe which hardly knew what to expect or desire was soon relieved of uncertainty. On October 17 and 18 Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece recalled their Ambassadors from Constantinople. Four days later in Thrace at the historic Battle of Kirk-Kilissé the Bulgarian army routed the Turkish.

3

For a moment the allies were expected to make a triumphant entry into Constantinople. And when at the beginning of December they halted before the lines of Chataldja after investing Adrianople, Turkey in Europe, apart from the environs of Constantinople and a fragment of Thrace, could be regarded as a thing of the past. An historic event of such grave import threatened the equilibrium of Europe. How could Austria witness without anxiety this sudden aggrandisement of Serbia which brought the Serbs to the coast of the Adriatic? And if she intervened by force to debar the Serbs from access to the Adriatic, or perhaps to take possession of the Salonika route, would the Russian Government tolerate her intervention? In the name of Slavonic racial solidarity and pushed forward by the pan-Slavs Russia might perhaps intervene, if need be in the teeth of certain Balkan Slavs, to obtain possession of Constantinople and a free access to the Mediterranean. But Austria was the ally of Germany. She could not go to war without her ally's approval, and if a war against Serbia became a war against Russia, the German army would come to the aid of the Austrian. France in turn was Russia's ally. An alliance which at the end of the nineteenth century might have been regarded as protecting France against the danger of a German invasion now exposed her to it.

[1] *Documents diplomatiques français* . . . 3e Série, vol. iii, p. 303 *n.*; Deville to Raymond Poincaré, August 1, 1912 (ibid., p. 314).

But it was quite impossible for France to break free from the alliance. The German Government left her no choice in the matter. The mere existence of a large French army in its rear while it was fighting the Russian forces constituted too great a military danger for the German Staff to accept. A march on Paris and the annihilation of the French army would be the first act of the European war, as its scenario had been drawn up in Berlin. But if France were involved in war, England, her cordial friend, could not remain a disinterested spectator. What would her attitude be?

We must bear in mind that it was at the very time when the Balkan War was brewing and finally broke out that the Foreign Office and Admiralty concluded the double negotiations which led on the one hand to a written definition of the *entente* in November 1912, on the other to the conclusion in February 1913 of a naval convention, which completed the alliance between the two armies, effected six years before, by an agreement between the two navies for concerted action against the common enemy. But it was at the same moment that Grey made the most marked advances to Germany he ever made while he was at the Foreign Office. On October 7 he sent for the chargé d'affaires, Von Kühlmann, communicated to him the conversations which had taken place between himself and Sazonov, who had just visited London, and expressed his wish, indeed his anxiety, to remain in touch with him.[1] At a second interview with Von Kühlmann on the 14th he seemed disappointed to hear that the German Government had not thought fit to reply to his advances,[2] and that very evening his chief secretary, Sir William Tyrell, dining with Von Kühlmann tendered him 'the olive branch' in the name of the Foreign Secretary and expressed the wish for 'an intimate collaboration between the two powers' not only in Europe, but in China, Persia, Turkey, and Africa.[3] The following morning Tyrell returned to the German Embassy to explain—presumably on Grey's behalf—that the evening before he had simply expressed his chief's personal views and that for the moment no communication would be made either to Sir Arthur Nicolson the permanent under-secretary, or to Sir

[1] Von Kühlmann to the German Foreign Office, October 7, 1912 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxiii, pp. 175–6).

[2] Von Kühlmann to Bethmann-Hollweg, October 14, 1912 (ibid., vol. xxxiii, p. 221).

[3] Von Kühlmann to Bethmann-Hollweg, October 15, 1912 (ibid., vol. xxxiii, p. 228 sqq.).

Edward Goschen, the British Ambassador at Berlin.[1] The prospect of an Anglo-German *entente* delighted the German chargé d'affaires. The Wilhelmstrasse was more sceptical though quite ready to take advantage of the British minister's friendly attitude.[2] What interpretation are we to put upon this secret advance by Grey? What light does it throw on the methods of British diplomacy at this juncture?

It suggests a disagreement between Grey's views and those current at the Foreign Office. For Sir Arthur Nicolson, as for his 'assistant', Sir Eyre Crowe, the distinction between an '*entente*' and an alliance was purely verbal: the Triple Entente was simply another Triple Alliance, a counterblast to the Triple Alliance between Germany, Austria, and Italy.[3] When Grey, before he took office had championed a *rapprochement* with France and Russia, his views probably did not differ from those of Sir Arthur Nicolson, his predecessor Lord Hardinge, and any diplomats he might choose to help him at the Foreign Office. But we have already seen how as a responsible minister he became the link between these permanent officials and a parliamentary majority and a Cabinet whose attitude was different. He was obliged to take their views into account and was perhaps himself affected in the long run by the arguments of those who were opposed to a policy of continental alliances. The result of these cross-currents was the elaboration of what we may term the doctrine of an *entente* as distinct from an alliance. The *entente* meant preparations complete to the last detail for concerted military action, to be taken automatically and immediately, by the parties to it, if ever they found themselves jointly engaged in war. And in the autumn of 1912 a further step was taken and France and England agreed that if a serious situation arose they would take joint diplomatic action without waiting for the outbreak of war. But this was all. There was no agreement to make war, in circumstances defined beforehand. Whatever the *casus belli* England reserved to the last moment her

[1] Von Kühlmann to the German Foreign Office, October 16, 1912 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxiii, p. 232).

[2] Von Kiderlen to Von Kühlmann, October 20, 1912 (ibid., vol. xxxiii, p. 233).

[3] Count von Benckendorff to Sazonov, November 1–14, 1912: '. . . Nicolson told Cambon with the utmost emphasis that in the event of war between the Triple and the Dual Alliance England would not in his opinion remain neutral. I must however add that Nicolson's views are not always the same as Grey's.' (Graf Benckendorff's, *Diplomatischer Briefwechsel* Band, ii, p. 491. Cf. Mensdorff's despatch from London of June 6, 1913 (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. vi, p. 608).

freedom to intervene or remain neutral. She even claimed the right, if the Power against which the *entente* was directed were willing to abstain from any step which would embroil England with her friends on the Continent and refrained from challenging her in a competition of armaments, to complete the *ententes* with France and Russia by some kind of *entente* with Germany. It was an *entente* of this kind which Grey offered Germany at the very moment when the first Balkan war broke out and Sir William Tyrell was his agent in the private negotiations he conducted with the two Great Powers of Central Europe,[1] while Sir Arthur Nicolson, kept in ignorance of Sir William's action, remained his agent in all dealings with France and Russia with whom he was determined to maintain cordial relations.[2] As for Grey himself, the language he used to the Ambassadors of France and Russia was not altogether the same as that employed by his

[1] For the part played at this junction by Sir William Tyrell see Prince Lichnowsky *Meine Londoner Mission*, Eine Denkschrift, verfasst in August 1916, p. 26. 'After the Foreign Secretary, Sir A. Nicolson and Sir W. Tyrell were the most influential persons at the Foreign Office. The former was no friend of ours. . . . He was in the confidence of my French colleague with whom he was in permanent contact. He even wanted to replace Lord Bertie in Paris. . . . Sir Edward Grey's private secretary, Sir W. Tyrell possessed far greater influence than the permanent under-secretary. A man of very high intellectual gifts he had studied at a Gymnasium in Germany. He adopted a diplomatic career but had served abroad only a short time. Though he shared at first the anti-German attitude popular among young British diplomats he became later the convinced advocate of an understanding with our country. He has influenced Sir Edward Grey with whom he was on intimate terms in this direction.' For the confidential relations between Tyrell and Count' Mensdorff throughout the Balkan wars see the latter's despatches. April 11, 15, May 9, June 4, 1913, *Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. vi, pp. 105, 159, 397, 596–7. This would seem to have been his attitude since the beginning of 1911 (see Count Mensdorff's despatches March 17, May 26, 1911. ibid., pp. 214–252. In the spring of 1914 we find von Jagow the German Foreign Minister attempting to arrange a meeting with Tyrell. But the latter refused (G. von Jagow, *England und der Kriegsausbruch. Eine Auseinandersctzung mit Lord Grey, mit einem Nachwort von Alfred von Wegener*, 1925, p. 32 *n.*).) But at this very time Tyrell was the diplomatic agent whom Grey employed to explore the possibility of effecting a *rapprochement* with Germany through the mediation of the United States (see above p. 618).

[2] Notice how Grey himself on the eve of the World War described the relations between England and France and Russia. Sir Edward Grey to Sir Edward Goschen, June 24, 1914: '. . . I said to Prince Lichnowsky that I felt some difficulty in talking to him about our relations with France and Russia. It was quite easy for me to say, and quite true, that there was no alliance; no agreement committing us to action; and that all the agreements of that character that we had with France and Russia had been published. On the other hand, I did not wish to mislead the ambassador by making him think that the relations that we had with France and Russia were less cordial and intimate than they really were. Though we were not bound by engagement as allies, we did from time to time talk as intimately as allies. . . .' (*British Documents* . . . vol. xi, pp. 4–5.) Colonel House to President Wilson, August 1, 1914: '. . . Sir Edward Grey told me that England had no written agreement with either Russia or France, or any formal alliance; that the situation was brought about by a mutual desire for protection; and that they discussed international matters with as much freedom with one another as if they had an actual written alliance.' (*The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, vol. i, p. 485.)

Under-Secretary, nor was the language he used to the German Ambassador exactly the same as that employed by his private secretary. In particular he was careful to explain to Lichnowsky that if he was so anxious for German assistance in his efforts to maintain peace, it was because in the event of a war between the Continental Powers England could not avoid intervention and if she intervened it would not be on the side of Germany.[1] On the other hand when King George, speaking to Prince Henry of Prussia, used the firm language which Sir Arthur Nicolson might have employed had he been King instead of a mere official at the Foreign Office, Grey expressed his entire approval.[2] The system was a maze in whose windings Lord Haldane had all but lost himself a few months earlier. But its architect, Grey, threaded his way with an imperturbable *sangfroid*.

4

The policy of the British Government, as we have just described it, proved successful since the Balkan crisis was settled without a European war. The success however was due in reality to the fact

[1] Prince Lichnowsky to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, December 4, 1912: 'If a European war broke out as a result of Austrian action against Serbia, and Russia, yielding to the pressure of public opinion and to avoid another humiliation such as she suffered in 1909, invaded Galicia, a step which would involve our intervention, France could not avoid taking part in the war and the further consequences could not be foreseen. This is the second occasion on which he has made use of this latter circumlocution whose significance cannot be misunderstood. In this connection several persons in his intimacy have told me during the last few days that the present government is determined to do everything possible to prevent European complications arising because it fears they might hinder the *rapprochement* with ourselves which it desires to bring about, and it is a matter of life and death for her, though England has no secret agreements with France to prevent our inflicting a crushing defeat upon France. England would therefore find herself compelled in the event of our victory over France to intervene on her behalf.' (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxiii, pp. 417, 453.) Notice on the other hand the caution with which Grey refused to inform Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador, what attitude England would adopt should the war become general. (Count von Benckendorff to Sazonov, November 1–14, 1912; Graf von Benckendorff, *Diplomatischer Briefwechsel*, vol. ii, p. 490.)

[2] Mensdorff telegram despatched from London, December 22, 1912. 'When Prince Henry of Prussia visited England not long ago and the King told him he was sorry that Herr von Bethmann in his speech in the Reichstag had directly alluded to the possibility of war and had not maintained the same reserve as Count Berchfeld, M. Sazonov and Sir Edward Grey Prince Henry asked him the direct question whether in the event of a war between Austria-Hungary and Germany and Russia and France England would intervene on behalf of the latter. King George replied, "Certainly under certain circumstances". When Prince Henry displayed annoyance and surprise the King proceeded: "Do you imagine we have less sense of honour than you? You have formal alliances, we have unwritten understandings. But we cannot allow either France or Russia to be defeated." ' (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. v, pp. 212–4.)

that throughout the crisis the policy of the other Governments resembled in many respects that of the British. In every European capital the desire to preserve peace proved stronger than the spirit of warlike adventure and the sentiment of what was once more termed by the revival of an old phrase the 'European concert' prevailed over the spirit of national and racial animosity which inspired the two rival groups. In the first place we must remember that the web of international relations was so complicated that the system of alliances could not always be consistently worked. In Constantinople France was obliged to support Russia for political reasons, but her financial interests inclined her rather to the side of Germany, and it often happened that the French Ambassador, speaking as the mouthpiece of the French colony, expressed himself in a sense hostile to Russia and sometimes even to England. Germany was the ally not only of Austria, but of Italy, and to prevent Italy leaving the Triple Alliance the German Government was compelled to discourage any Austrian attempt at expansion in the Mediterranean area. In the second place the revival in the three Courts of Berlin, Vienna, and Petersburg of that spirit of monarchical solidarity on which the Holy Alliance had been based a century earlier was a powerful factor making for peace. The Emperor Francis Joseph sent an Austrian noble of high rank to Petersburg on a mission of conciliation. At Petersburg the Conservative party, the determined champion of an understanding with the Prussian monarchy, held office in the person of Kokovtsov. King George and the Emperor Nicolas visited Berlin for the marriage of a royal Princess and their friendly conversations with the German Emperor, if apparently devoid of any political character, helped nevertheless to relax the diplomatic tension.[1] Finally the great civilized nations had for close upon fifty years grown unaccustomed to war, though making unremitting preparations for it, and statesmen on the brink of the gulf which divides peace and war, were sensible of the abyss at their feet and shrank from taking the plunge.

The British attitude however differed in one respect from that of

[1] See the private letter written by Szögyény from Berlin on May 20, 1913: '. . . I have been able to have a few words only with Herr von Jagow since his return from Vienna. He and the other officials of the Foreign Office are at present so busy making preparations to receive the royal guests who are coming to Berlin for the wedding of Princess Victoria Louise that as the Secretary of State assured me, they have at present no time for politics and are thinking of nothing but the marriage.' (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. vi, p. 467.)

the other Governments. The British Government wanted the European states to settle the Balkan crisis by joint action, to forget as far as possible their membership of opposite political groups and think only of the supreme interest of peace. The other Powers, however, refused to lose sight of their alliances even for the moment. They regarded the European concert as an understanding between two combinations which even while acting together must act as such. One Government perhaps pursued a slightly different policy. The German Government sought to drive a wedge into the Triple Entente by separating France from Russia, as it had successfully done in 1909 and in 1911, or England from France and Russia, and though on this occasion it failed to achieve the former object, it could cherish or at least spread the belief that it had achieved the latter. Foreign policy during the last few years has been too rigid, Haldane told Lichnowsky on December 3, it must be made more gelatinous.[1] And since this was precisely the aim which the Prussian Government was pursuing, at least so far as the Triple Entente was concerned—it wanted to reduce it to a jelly—we often receive the impression during the long months for which the Balkan wars dragged on that a reconciliation had begun between England and Germany. It was loudly advertised in Germany. And the English were delighted.

For the real difference between British policy and that of the other nations must be sought not in the attitude of their respective Governments but in the attitude of the people. On the Continent the Governments of the great nations were more cautious than the public, at least that opinionated and violent section of the public which finds utterance in the Press. As regards Austria this is a truism. In Russia reaction against the schemes of annexation entertained by the military party in Austria had provoked a pan-Slavonic campaign in the Press which caused the ministers considerable embarrassment. It was only natural that the Germans of Germany should make common cause with the Germans of Austria in the event of a conflict with the Slavs. In France the news of the first Turkish defeats was the signal for an enthusiastic celebration by almost the entire Press of the victories won by the allies which were regarded as victories won by Le Creusot's cannon over Krupp's, victories therefore of the French over the

[1] Prince Lichnowsky to Bethmann-Hollweg, December 3, 1912 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxix, pp. 121–2).

German army. Moreover, we must remember that the German and French Governments were faced by special difficulties in pursuing a policy of peace. For at the opening of 1913 the German Government thought it necessary to make provision against the dangers of the moment by asking for an enormous increase in the army, to which the French Government replied by asking for a return to the system of three years' service. But in two countries possessing universal suffrage an elective assembly could be induced to shoulder such burdens only by inflaming the patriotic sentiments of the masses. It was no easy task to pursue at the same time a foreign policy of peace and a European concert. England was confronted by no such difficulties.

When we read English newspapers of the period we gather at first the impression of a profound cleavage in public opinion. Generally speaking the Conservative Press, attached though it might be to the principle of an *entente* with Russia when the threat from the German navy had to be met in the West, detected Russian pan-Slavism at work behind the Balkan alliance, pictured the Russian army already on the Bosphorus and upheld the traditional English policy of protecting Turkey against Russia. And how could Great Britain, a great Moslem Power, favour a war which had the aspect of a crusade without giving offence to millions of her subjects? When, lastly, the owner of an important Unionist paper was a Jew his indignation against the barbarities of Russian anti-semitism strengthened his mistrust of the policy pursued at Petersburg. Among the Liberals on the contrary the spectacle of Bulgarians, Serbs, and Greeks reconciled against the Turk revived the old Liberal-Christian tradition of Gladstone. A year earlier the prospect of a war in which the English would shed their blood to serve the interests of French against German imperialism was anathema to the staff of the *Nation* and the *Manchester Guardian* and to combat it the utilitarian philosophy of peace at any price made fashionable by Norman Angell was accepted without reserve. It was altogether different now. War, it was allowed, might be noble, if waged for justice and liberty. But where was the Gladstone to lead this movement of public opinion? Churchill who blew the war trumpet[1] did not possess, as everyone admitted,

[1] Speech at Sheffield, October 30, 1912: '... We have sometimes been assured by persons who profess to know that the danger of war has become an illusion and that in these modern days that danger would not exist at all but for the machinations of statesmen and diplomatists, but for the intrigues of financiers, aided by the groundless suspicions of

the temperament of a Gladstone. Conceivably Lloyd George might have been attracted by such a role. But he had other concerns. Moreover if a new Gladstone could have been discovered, not only would he have failed to arouse popular enthusiasm, he would not even have found a Lord Beaconsfield to combat. The time had gone by when parties were divided by questions of foreign policy. The nation, completely absorbed by social and Irish questions, made the Press, whatever its political complexion, understand that it must be more moderate in the expression of its preferences. When he adopted an attitude of strict neutrality and impartial opposition to the war and tried to induce the other powers to do the same, Grey was pursuing to the letter the policy the British people wished him to pursue.

Count Berchtold was the first statesman to appeal to the powers to intervene: in August 1912 he invited them to put joint pressure on the allies to prevent them from declaring war, and on Turkey to secure the adoption of reforms which by satisfying its Christian subjects would deprive the former of every pretext for hostilities. The initiative was coldly received by the Foreign Office, which saw nothing but danger in the suggestion of putting pressure on the Turkish Government. When, at the end of September, the allies had mobilized and war was imminent it was the turn of Raymond Poincaré, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister and shortly to become President of the Republic, to intervene. He suggested joint action by the Powers to inform the allies that no alteration in the map of the Balkans would be tolerated, the Turks that they must carry out long-promised reforms in favour of the Christian population of their empire. The British Government was the last to accept the French proposal, which in its opinion bore too hardly upon the Turks. But hostilities had

generals and admirals and fomented by the sensationalism of the Press—all directed upon the ignorance and credulity of the people. Well, here is a war which has arisen from none of these causes, which has broken out in spite of all that rulers and diplomatists could do to prevent it, a war in which the Press has had no part, a war which the whole force of the money power has been subtly and steadfastly directed to prevent, which has come upon us, not through the ignorance and credulity of the people, but on the contrary, through their knowledge of their history and their destiny, and through their intense realization of their wrongs and of their duties, as they conceived them, a war which from all these causes has burst upon us with all the force of a spontaneous explosion, and which in strife and destruction has carried all before it. Face to face with this manifestation, who is the man who is foolish enough to say that force is never a remedy? Who is the man who is vain enough to suppose that the long antagonism of history, and of time can in all circumstances be adjusted by the smooth and superficial conventions of politicians and ambassadors?'

already opened and it was obvious that no diplomatic action could prevent thoroughgoing changes in the boundaries of the Balkan States. Poincaré was the first to suggest mediation by the Great Powers and an international conference to decide the conditions of peace, and his proposals were finally accepted though not without very considerable modifications.

In the first place there was no new Congress of Berlin at which the Powers carved up the Balkans as they thought fit. There was simply a conference at a European capital of delegates from the belligerent nations and at the same time a 'meeting'—nothing more—of the ambassadors of the Great Powers to deliberate on the questions, strictly limited in number, which the Balkan war had raised and which might endanger the peace of the world. In the second place Poincaré had wanted the Conference to be held in Paris. Sazonov made the proposal on his behalf and it was warmly welcomed by Grey, who wished to escape the responsibility and vexations a conference in London would involve. But the Central Powers wanted London—not Paris. In Paris Russia would be represented by Isvolsky. Obsessed by the desire to avenge the humiliation he had endured in 1909 as Foreign Minister, Isvolsky was making unwearied efforts to conquer the Press and the political world. It would be preferable to deal with Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador in London, a man of mature wisdom, a diplomat of the old school, and a supporter of the policy of a European concert. In Paris a partisan Press treated the Balkan war as if it were a French war. The atmosphere of London was more favourable to a conference of arbitration. Finally Poincaré was too energetic a statesman, too obviously eager to play a leading part as chairman of the Conference. Grey would make a better chairman, for the very reason that he had no desire to preside.

We must not therefore imagine that the British public or even the Londoners were flattered that London had been chosen as the scene of so important an event. The general feeling was one of indifference, if not boredom. The presence of this host of Levantines from Constantinople, Athens, Sofia, and Belgrade who merely added their quota to the social chatter in the lounges of the great cosmopolitan hotels passed almost unnoticed. As for the conversations between the ambassadors Grey was at pains to give them as unceremonious and private a character as possible. He was often absent even at the most critical moments and his

place as the representative of the Cabinet was taken by Asquith or Lord Morley. These disappearances surprised the foreigners who attributed to the British minister when he absented himself motives of which he was completely innocent.[1] He simply wanted a rest. 'There is some prospect of rain and if so the sport will be very good. It seems almost too much to expect that everything including both Balkan crises and salmon should go well simultaneously, but things seem to prosper so well in my absence that it would not be in the public interest for me to curtail it. I am in rude health with an appetite for everything except office work.'[2] This British indifference has always nonplussed and exasperated Continental diplomats. Listen to Lichnowsky, after his first meeting with Grey on the latter's return from holiday. 'I have just had an interview with Sir Edward Grey in which we discussed the situation fully. He regards it with his usual imperturbability and icy calm. He even found time to tell me all about the fish he caught on his holiday.'[3]

5

The Chataldja armistice was not the inauguration of peace. Outstanding questions remained to be settled—the Greek claim to the islands and the Bulgarian claim to Adrianople. For the Greeks had not taken the islands, nor the Bulgars Adrianople. A renewal of hostilities was expected daily. If they broke out, pan-Slavic opinion in Russia demanded a demonstration against Turkey whose obstinacy was delaying peace. Sazonov proposed a joint naval demonstration. Grey, his colleagues in the Cabinet and the Foreign Office hung back. If the Young Turks refused to yield, it would mean war and England would not have war under any circumstances. Fortunately for England the German Government flatly rejected the suggestion of a naval demonstration. To pacify Russia Grey was content to propose, if the Bulgarians captured Chataldja and anarchy prevailed at Constantinople, the despatch of an international squadron, not to carry out a naval

[1] See the report of Commander Horvath, military attaché to the Austro-Hungarian Embassy in London, April 24, 1913 (Feldmarshall Conrad von Hötzendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, vol. iii, pp. 264 sqq.).

[2] Sir Edward Grey to Sir Arthur Nicolson, April 19, 1913 (Harold Nicolson, *Lord Carnock*, p. 389).

[3] Prince Lichnowsky to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, April 28, 1913 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxiv[II], p. 756).

demonstration, but merely to protect Europeans whose lives might be in danger. Again Germany refused, maintaining that the vessels already stationed in the Dardanelles would be sufficient for the purpose. And the British Government, a faithful mirror of public feeling, was only too pleased to yield to the German objection. Meanwhile the war party gained the upper hand in Constantinople, imprudently broke the armistice and when hostilities were renewed, lost Adrianople. Slowly and under great difficulties negotiations began in London between the delegates of the allies and the Turkish delegates. But new questions now occupied the meetings of the ambassadors, in the first place that of Albania.

When, in 1912, the Balkan Powers formed a league against Turkey, Serbia, and Greece had divided Albania, and Montenegro demanded her share of the spoils. But neither Italy nor Austria would accept such an extension of Greece and still less of Serbia to the Adriatic coast. They agreed to invoke against Greece and Serbia the principle of nationality which the latter had invoked against the Ottoman Empire. They claimed Albania not for themselves, deadly foes in spite of their alliance, but for the Albanians. To define the status of this new country, trace its frontiers, and find a way without giving Serbia the territorial outlet on the sea which she demanded and upon which the Russian Government, defying the Pan-Slavists' anger, refused to insist, of granting her at least certain facilities of commercial transit were the problems which from December onwards were the ordinary topics of discussion at the ambassadors' meetings.

But the Montenegrin army, assisted by Serbian reinforcements and commanded at one moment by a Serbian general, defied the prohibition of the Powers and continued to invest the town of Scutari. Would this involve war with Austria? And if a war broke out between Austria and Serbia would it in turn involve a European war? There was only one way by which the danger could be removed; the European concert must prove its solidarity by a joint demonstration which would compel Montenegro to yield. On March 22 the ambassadors' meeting decided to make the proposal. On the 25th Grey and Asquith, speaking in the House of Commons, advised Montenegro not to persist in a war from which she would not be allowed to reap any advantage and warned her that she would 'be confronted . . . with the united

pressure of all the Powers'.[1] But what form should this pressure take? Berlin proposed a naval demonstration by Austria and Italy as mandatories of all the Powers. Grey thought it inadvisable that the mandatories should be two members of the same group. He suggested a naval demonstration in which the fleets of the six Great Powers should participate. But fear of the Pan-Slavists compelled the Russian Government to refuse. It advised the French Government to take part in the demonstration but dared not give it an official commission to do so. And without that commission the French Government shrank from associating itself with the demonstration, for it dared not brave the anger of the French Press, more Slavophil than the Russian Government itself. For a moment England was faced with the danger of being involved in a step in which her only associates would be the three members of the Triple Alliance. In the end the danger was averted. A French man-of-war joined the rest acting in the name of France and at the invitation of Russia. As a result of the joint action of the Powers the Serbian Government withdrew its forces from the walls of Scutari. But the Montenegrins persisted with the siege and took Scutari unaided. What was the use of the naval demonstration, if this affront was not met by the landing of troops? This however England would not hear of. Scutari was not worth the life of a single bluejacket.[2] Grey was content with informing King Nicolas 'that if he submitted to the wishes of the

[1] Sir Edward Grey's speech: '. . . Once an announcement has been made to Servia and Montenegro that the Powers have come to an agreement and of their decision, there ought to be a cessation of hostilities in what is in future to be Albania. . . . If the decision of the Powers is not respected, then I trust that those who dispute it will be confronted, not with any separate action on the part of one Power, which may divide the Powers, but with the united Pressure of all the Powers.' He adds the following characteristic qualification: 'This is only a mediation of the Powers. I do not mean to say that the Powers have made up their minds to enforce a compulsory arbitration or to impose terms.' (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1913; 5th Series, vol. I, pp. 1499–1500.)

[2] Prince Lichnowsky to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, April 24, 1913: '. . . I am convinced that the present Government will never take the responsibility of exposing British troops to the danger of being fired upon by the Montenegrins, if only because such a war would be unpopular.' Von Tschirschky to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, April 24, 1913: '. . . Mr. Asquith and Sir A. Nicolson have given me to understand that they will not take the risk of British soldiers being fired upon.' Prince Lichnowsky to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, April 25, 1913: 'Mr. Asquith . . . asked me not to persist with a proposal involving the participation of British troops. Public opinion as it is at present would not support the Government in such action and the Cabinet as was agreed at the last Cabinet council was therefore not in a position to hazard the lives of British subjects.' Von Tschirschky to the German Foreign Office, April 28, 1913: 'The King (King George in the course of conversation with the Austrian) expressed himself strongly against the despatch of troops. He would not take the risk that British soldiers might be fired upon.' (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxiv[1], pp. 724, 727, 734, 760.)

Powers, they were prepared to discuss reasonable concessions *after the evacuation of Scutari*. If on the contrary he refused their request the British Government would give him no support and leave him to his fate'.[1] Paris followed suit. Did this not give Austria a free hand to take independent action if Montenegro proved obstinate? But the inaction of the British ministers was justified by the event. Vienna found no support at Berlin and was afraid of provoking by its intervention a counter-intervention by Italy. The King of Montenegro on the other hand was not encouraged by Petersburg and yielded. Austrian militarists were disappointed in their hope of a war of conquest. But the Slavs lost Scutari.

6

On May 30 a general pacification seemed imminent. At Grey's invitation the delegates to the Conference signed the 'Preliminaries of London'. By its terms Turkey surrendered to the allies the district of Adrianople and Crete and left the fate of the islands and the Athos peninsula to the decision of the six Great Powers. But it did not mean peace, for the allies had still to divide the spoils of victory and it had long been known in London that there was dissension between them. Serbia and Greece deprived by the powers of Albania, which they had partitioned in anticipation in 1912, demanded compensation in the east in Macedonia. The agreement of 1912 had assigned part of Macedonia to Bulgaria and left the other part to the Czar's decision. But it was occupied at present by Serbian and Greek forces. It was for the Bulgarians to conquer it by force if they dared. They dared and war broke out afresh. The Bulgarians were attacked in the rear by Roumania, which for months had demanded a rectification of the frontier to the disadvantage of Bulgaria—a conference of ambassadors at Petersburg had attempted in vain to arrange an amicable settlement—and in front by Turkey, delighted to have this opportunity to take her revenge within a few months for such crushing defeats.

It was a sordid struggle but its ignobility actually favoured the maintenance of peace, for it cut across the two rival systems of

[1] Pichon to Doulcet, April 29, 1913 (*Ministére des Affaires étrangères. Documents diplomatiques. Les affaires balkaniques* [1912–1914], 1920. T. II, p. 174).

the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. The German Government supported Roumania, as also did the French, though hampered by fear of jeopardizing the alliance with Russia. On the other hand Austria, the foe of Serbia, and Russia, the foe of Roumania, found themselves unexpectedly united in a common support of Bulgaria. Once more Austria wanted to go to war, once more Germany held her back. For some weeks relations between the two allies were extremely strained. Finally, when the Turkish army reconquered Adrianople the position of the Powers became still more awkward. For it was the preliminaries of London of which they were guarantors which the Turkish Government was tearing up. The Russian Government demanded an armed demonstration, naval to begin with. In England, the conflict between Turkey's friends and foes broke out anew. The latter were the more numerous in the Liberal party and Asquith thought it safe to threaten Turkey at a public meeting.[1] But her friends proved finally the more powerful, not only in the country as a whole but even in the Liberal ranks, because their policy was one of inaction. Grey was willing to agree to independent intervention by Russia, provided it had the approval of Berlin, or alternatively to a joint naval demonstration if all the Powers took part in it. In other words he opposed from the outset any naval demonstration, because he knew Germany objected. He suggested financial action, but the financiers, particularly the French, would not hear of a measure from which Turkey's French creditors would be the first to suffer. Nothing was done and on July 29, tired out and as usual impatient to begin his holiday, Grey proposed that the ambassadors' meeting should be adjourned *sine die*. It was in vain that Cambon and Benckendorff protested against a decision which seemed to denote a rupture between the Powers. In a fortnight's time the ambassadors were forgotten.

At last peace was signed on August 10 at the capital of a victorious Roumania between Bulgaria on the one hand, Roumania, Serbia and Greece on the other, and the treaty of Bucharest was completed on September 17 by a treaty signed at Constantinople between Bulgaria and Turkey. Bulgaria lost the entire basin of the Vardar; Salonika and a considerable portion of Thrace, including the fort of Cavala, went to Greece. Roumania annexed a large strip of Bulgarian territory between the Danube and the

[1] Speech at Birmingham, July 21, 1913.

sea. And the Bulgars lost Adrianople, only a few weeks after the Serbo-Montenegrins had lost Scutari. It was on this final point that the agreement concluded in London was directly violated. The defeated party was therefore entitled to call upon the Powers to intervene or at least to protest. The Russian and Austrian Governments demanded that the Treaty of Bucharest should be revised and for a moment Grey seemed disposed to agree. A considerable section of the British Press and of the Liberal Press in particular was clamouring for a revision of the treaty. But he was confronted by the opposition of the German and French Governments, and he retreated. He soon perceived that the public indignation was superficial and that the dominant sentiment throughout the country was delight that peace had been restored on any terms whatsoever. The public would not admit that the European concert had failed. For although it had not succeeded in preventing war from breaking out, and twice recommencing and had dictated only to a very slight extent the conditions of peace, it had at least kept the struggle localized in the Balkans and prevented it from developing into a European war.[1] Men of all parties were grateful to Grey for having done more than any other statesman to achieve this result, by his firm determination to do nothing. His popularity, eclipsed at the beginning of 1912 because he had committed England more deeply than she desired to Continental entanglements in the train of France, was greater than ever at the close of 1913 because he had adopted the contrary attitude on dealing with Balkan affairs.

[1] It is amusing to read in the *New Statesman*, within a fortnight's interval, two diametrically opposite estimates of the diplomacy of the Powers during the Balkan wars, both supported by equally good arguments. November 15, 1913: '. . . The Concert of Europe . . . during the past twelve months has come to grief over many fences there. It ordered the Balkan allies not to go to war with Turkey—and they went to war. It ordered the Montenegrins not to take Scutari—and they took Scutari. It forced Greece and Servia to sign the Treaty of London with the Turks—and then let the Turks break the Treaty. It commanded the Turks to leave Adrianople—and allowed them to stay there. It looked on and let Austria egg on Bulgaria to attack her allies and egg on the Albanians to raid Servia. It extracted a promise from Italy to leave the Ægean—and is permitting her to make open arrangements to remain there. It has alternately worried the weak and yielded to the strong and has been by turns meddlesome, callous and helpless.' November 29, 1913 (an article by Lord Esher): 'The art of diplomacy has been justified in 1913. A Balkan war, annually prophesied as impending and to be certain to precipitate Armageddon, has come and gone. Europe, in the sense of what are called the Great Powers, remained at peace. This was due, not to the special friendliness of nations, certainly not to the restraint of the Press but to the governments concerned and to their representatives: in short, to the art of diplomacy.'

But was the peace likely to prove lasting? This was very widely doubted, and when the King of Roumania in a telegram of thanks which he sent to the Emperor William swore that the 'peace would be definitive', a diplomat unkindly added 'definitive for the moment'. *The Times* comforted itself by reflecting: 'The moment may be a long one.'[1] The moment was not destined to last long—less than a year—and a succession of incidents immediately warned the diplomatists that at any time a third Balkan war might break out in the South-East of Europe. In that event would the miracle of the months which had just passed be repeated and the Great Powers continue to be neutral?

Throughout the winter and the following spring the question of Albania caused anxiety to the Governments of Europe. For this petty barbarian state was their work, created to keep the Serbians from the sea and prevent the Austrians and Italians from coming to blows. Its frontiers must now be drawn, the Serbian on the north, the Greek on the south. The task was entrusted to two international commissions. On both commissions the attitude of the British members was strictly impartial. The English member of the commission appointed to demarcate the northern frontier openly professed himself in favour of a *rapprochement*, if not an actual alliance, between England and Germany and refused all the suggestions for common action made by the French and Russian commissioners: 'England', he said, 'desired a friendly understanding with all nations.'[2] The English member of the southern frontier commission was, like his wife, a keen traveller, delighted with the prospect of hunting in the Albanian mountains. 'His Government', he explained, 'cared only for one thing, that peace should be preserved in the Balkans, he did not care in the least whether Albania was a little larger or a little smaller.'[3] Nevertheless incidents ensued of a nature to disturb the sangfroid of the British Government and its agents. On October 18th the Austrian Government called upon Serbia to evacuate within a week areas

[1] *The Times*, August 11, 1913.

[2] Commander von Laffert, German member of the commission delimiting the northern frontier of Albania to Bethmann-Hollweg, November 14, 1913 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxvi, p. 223).

[3] Commander Thierry, German member of the commission delimiting the southern frontier of Albania to Bethmann-Hollweg, September 4, 1913 (ibid., vol. xxxvi, p. 140).

which Europe had assigned to Albania. Threatened with an Austrian invasion the Serbian Government submitted. Grey made energetic protests to the Austrian Government. What need of this bellicose and isolated action when the peaceful pressure of the Great Powers acting in concert would have been sufficient?[1]

The Austrian ultimatum was a serious matter. For in the present instance Austria's action was taken with the approval and encouragement of Germany, withheld on previous occasions. The very day the ultimatum was despatched, the Emperor William, celebrating at Leipzig amid a vast concourse of spectators the centenary of the Battle of the Nations, held a long conversation with Field-Marshal Conrad von Hötzendorf in which he maintained Austria's right to destroy Serbia.[2] At Vienna a week later he expressed himself still more strongly to the same effect.[3] A week later still in a conversation with the King of the Belgians at Berlin he made it plain that in his opinion a European war was imminent and inevitable.[4] In short, for the first time, instead of holding the Austrian Government back or following it reluctantly when it took a step likely to lead to war, Berlin encouraged Vienna to pursue a bellicose policy. London indeed knew nothing of this. The newspapers devoted very little space to the Austrian ultimatum.[5] The Irish question, which had reached an acute stage, occupied public attention and provided ample material to fill their columns. But at Petersburg this new success won by Austria at the expense of the Southern Slavs aroused the anger of the Pan-

[1] Von Kühlmann to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. London, October 20, 1913 (*Die Grosse Politik . . .* vol. xxxvi, p. 407).

[2] Conrad von Hötzendorf, *Aus Meiner Dienstzeit*, vol. iii, pp. 496 sqq.

[3] S. Berchtold. Account of a conversation with the German Emperor William II on October 28, 1913 (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik . . .* vol. vii, pp. 512 sqq.).

[4] Baron Beyens, *Deux Années à Berlin 1912–1914*, 1921, vol. ii, pp. 38 sqq. Cf. Jules Cambon to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, November 22, 1913 (*Ministère des affaires étrangères. Documents diplomatiques 1914. La Guerre européenne*, vol. i, p. 20).

[5] In its number of October 21 the *Daily Telegraph* speaks of 'the high-handed action of the Austrian Government which I have good reason to add, was strongly backed, if not encouraged, by the Berlin Government' but, while deploring the methods adopted by Austria expressed its pleasure that Serbia had yielded thus ensuring a peaceful issue of the conflict. Both *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* informed their readers of the ultimatum without comment and devoted a leader to the anniversary of the Battle of Leipzig. The only difference between the two papers was that the *Manchester Guardian* gave an entire column to the commemoration of the Battle. The *Observer* of the 19th published a despatch from Vienna in five lines without comment and a leading article on the Leipzig celebrations. The *Sunday Times* (October 19 and 26) treated the matter with the utmost sangfroid. Russia and Austria were agreed and Serbia could no longer exploit their differences. 'Thus ends the latest, and probably the last, trouble arising out of the Balkan Wars, for an eventual understanding between Greece and Turkey is also confidently expected.'

Slavists, who thought themselves entitled to demand their revenge when, on November 6, it became known that the Turkish Government had invited to Constantinople to act as instructor of the Turkish army and take command of a division in the capital itself, the German General Liman von Sanders.

The Russian public called upon a Cabinet which the more fiery patriots had long blamed for excessive complaisance towards the Central Empire to take action in face of this new German encroachment. This time Kokovtsoff did not dare to ignore public opinion, and the Ministers under the pressure of the Pan-Slavists, who found a champion in Sazonov even considered—though they finally rejected it—the suggestion of armed intervention in Asia Minor.[1] The ambassadors of the three Entente Powers jointly asked the Porte to revoke a step which gave Russia legitimate cause for complaint. But if the German Government gave way it was not to avoid offending Great Britain. For it was obviously only for form's sake that she took part in the Russian protest. British public opinion was still completely indifferent to events in the Balkans and Grey's hands were further tied by the fact that the Turkish Government as a counterpoise to German influence had just given the command of the fleet to a British Admiral.[2] The German Government yielded because it did not want a pro-German Government at Petersburg turned out of office, as was likely to happen if its prestige were persistently weakened. Liman von Sanders kept the training of the Turkish army in his hands. But the Turkish Government raised him to the rank of a Field Marshal. This made it impossible for him to remain in command of a division in Constantinople and the Russians were satisfied.

This question had no sooner been settled when the Albanian

[1] *Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxviii, pp. 191 sqq. M. Pokrowski, *Drei Konferenzen* (*Zur Vorgeschichte des Kreiges*) 1920, pp. 32 sqq. The project of military action, this time in the Dardanelles, was again examined by the Russian Government on February 21, 1914. But it was not a step to be taken immediately. It was a plan of campaign against Turkey in the supposition of a European war already begun. (M. Pokrowski, *Drei Konfernzen* . . . pp. 46 sqq.) In fact the chief of staff refused to consider the suggestion, which he said would unduly divide the armed forces of Russia, which must be employed wholly against Germany. This was what actually happened. Russia had not sufficient strength to make an attack on the Dardanelles from the north, and left it to England to make the attack, with French help, from the south, how unsuccessfully we know.

[2] Mensdorff. Report from London, December 17, 1913: 'When I called on Sir Edward Grey yesterday to take leave our conversation touched upon the German Military Mission to Constantinople. The Secretary of State remarked that "it is one of the most uncomfortable questions we have to deal with".' (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. vii, p. 663.) On this affair of General von Sanders see Sir George Buchanan, *My Mission to Russia*, vol. i, pp. 148–150.

question began once more to preoccupy the diplomatists. This time it was a question not of the frontier between Serbia and Albania, but of the frontier between Albania and Greece. Grey, shaking off for once his inertia, suggested a settlement by which Greece would be enabled to make in Albania the territorial concessions demanded of her without loss of prestige, because in return Turkey would abandon to her the islands of the Archipelago. It was an imprudent proposal. It did not succeed in putting an end to the conflict between Albania and Greece, for in March Epirus revolted against the Albanian Government and it aggravated the conflict between Greece and Turkey at the very time when the persecution of the Greeks in Thrace and Asia Minor by the Turks was becoming more severe. At one moment towards the middle of June war seemed imminent. Finding it impossible to persuade the Powers to take concerted action to put pressure upon Turkey, Grey, weary of the Balkan imbroglio, contemplated standing aside altogether and leaving affairs in the Near East to take their course.[1] But it was impossible to stand aside from a dispute which might result in closing the Dardanelles to British commerce. And was it so certain that a third Balkan war would be confined to Greece and Turkey? Would not Bulgaria and Roumania intervene? And in their train the Great Powers? Once more Grey spoke the language of 1912 and 1913 and sought the best method of 'localizing' the conflict.[2]

Once more the danger was staved off, but only that the Adriatic might again become the focus of attention. The Powers had undertaken not only to draw the frontiers of the new state of Albania but to provide it with a government and constitution. They chose as King, a German, Prince von Wied. But he was unable to establish an effective sovereignty over the country. The whole of Albania was in revolt. Besieged in Durazzo the King

[1] See already Mensdorff Report for London, February 13, 1914: 'It may well be disappointment at the course of events in Constantinople together with a certain weariness of spirit which has prompted Sir Edward Grey during the last few days to consider the possibility of withdrawing and keep open the possibility of doing so. Ever since my return the Foreign Secretary has shown, I have noticed, an increasing "lassitude". He is constantly using such language as "I am sick to death of the whole thing". The domestic situation and many other questions make large drafts upon his time and strength, and he had, I believe, entertained the confident expectation that his last proposals would have settled the questions of Albania and the islands—so far as the Powers are concerned.' (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. vii, pp. 866–7.)

[2] Memorandum communicated by the British Ambassador, June 17, 1914 (*Die Grosse Politik* . . . vol. xxxvi, pp. 817–8).

was watching his opportunity to take refuge on board a British man-of-war, whose presence in these waters had no other purpose. What was to be done? Give him the necessary troops to enforce his sovereignty? Not one of the Great Powers was prepared to do this, England least of all. Substitute for his government an Austro-Italian condominium of Austria and Italy? But in Albania nothing short of a war was being waged between the agents of the two Powers, and the supporters of the Prince von Wied accused Italy of fomenting the insurrection of Albania against a ruler too friendly to Germany and Austria. Leave the Albanians to settle their own fate, the Powers being content to guarantee their territorial integrity? But how could this integrity be guaranteed against an eventual invasion by the Serbs or Greeks except by that use of force to which England would not consent? Meanwhile the situation in Albania became worse every day. On June 27 the Austrian Government communicated to its Ambassador in Rome the text of an ultimatum addressed to the Italian Government demanding the immediate recall of the Italian Consul at Durazzo. The same day a recruiting agency was opened in Vienna to enlist volunteers to support Prince von Wied. Would the third Balkan war break out in Albania and take the form of a war between Austria and Italy?

8

It was unlikely. Germany had too much interest in settling the dispute, and preventing a war which began with a split in the Triple Alliance. But before the situation could be cleared up or further embroiled in Albania, a conflagration was kindled a little farther to the north, where the diplomats did not expect it, because the occasion did not come within their competence. It was not a question of foreign policy in the technical sense but of domestic. It was an episode which occurred within Austria-Hungary itself.

In fact, the domestic problems of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy hardly differed, if the diplomatists had viewed them in the right light, from the problems with which they were professionally concerned. For the struggle here was not between different classes of a single nation, but between nations within a

composite State. Two races shared power and oppressed a minority of subject races, Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs. As time went on, their discontent grew. The more intense it became, the stronger became the temptation felt by the two Governments, particularly the Hungarian, to settle the problem by force. All Europe was ringing with the story of the Agram trial and the documents forged by the Austrian police to secure the condemnation of the accused by a Hungarian court.

How are we to explain the increasing strength of national feeling within the Dual Monarchy? In the first place by the progress of democratic institutions. Universal suffrage had been introduced in Austria, the franchise considerably extended in Hungary. In consequence the disorder which prevailed in the legislatures became worse every year. In the Bohemian Diet the obstruction practised by the Germans had reached such a pitch that it became necessary to dissolve the Diet at the close of 1913. In revenge the Czechs organized such powerful obstruction in the Parliament at Vienna that in March 1914 the sittings had to be adjourned indefinitely. For if in the states of Northern and Western Europe democracy meant international Socialism, in the South-East of Europe it meant national independence. In the former rebellion was rebellion against war. In the latter it was war—hence the second reason why the domestic situation in Austria became so grave at this juncture, the recent events in the Balkans. The principle of nationality re-awakened in Asia had just destroyed the Ottoman Empire. Pursuing its revolutionary and fanatical course it was now issuing from the Balkan peninsula and invading the Danube basin, where it threatened to destroy in turn the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Three million emancipated Serbs exercised upon the six million Yugo-Slavs under the dominion of Austria the same attraction Piedmont had exercised upon the rest of Italy half a century before. At Belgrade there was a widespread desire for war, but many Serbians believed that the unification of the Southern Slavs would be achieved without fighting. Within the next three or four years the Austro-Hungarian empire would have broken up and the Serbs of Bosnia, the Croats and Slovenes would peacefully unite with Serbia.[1]

[1] See Sir George Buchanan's account of a conversation with the Emperor of Russia on April, 14, 1913: 'The Emperor spoke of Austria without any bitterness, but as a source of weakness to Germany and as a danger to peace, owing to the fact that Germany was bound to support her in her Balkan policy. He further expressed the opinion that the

Threatened by the revolt of their Slav subjects, the Germans in Austria were naturally led to draw closer to their brethren in Germany. A species of fusion was effected between the organizations and institutions of the two countries—churches, political parties, universities, and armies. Only court circles still displayed anxiety to safeguard national independence and saw with displeasure the Austrian Germans look up to the German Emperor as the head of their race. The courts apart, the two states composed a single nation, as Austria-Hungary on the other hand was a single state composed of several nations. Nor did the Germans of Austria simply ask the Germans of Germany to come to their help if the integrity of Austria-Hungary were endangered by an internal revolt. An entire party led by the Chief of Staff of the Austrian army, Marshal Conrad von Hötzendorff, advocated an offensive against Serbia and the conquest of that country. Once annexed, Serbia would be absorbed in a Yugo-Slav kingdom under the sovereignty of the Emperor Francis-Joseph. The dual system of Austria-Hungary would be replaced by a triple system, Austrian, Magyar, and Yugo-Slav, and the 'Greater Serbia' thus called into existence by the action of Austria would henceforward be a bulwark against the anti-Austrian Pan-Serbs of Belgrade. But the stroke would certainly have a repercussion in Russia, and it was at this point that the Austrians counted on the German army, perhaps to intimidate Russia and prevent her from declaring war on Austria, but more probably to make war on Russia. The plan of such a war had been in existence for many years past. It would open with a march on Paris through Belgium. Then when the French army had been wiped out and Germany's western frontier was secure, a march on Petersburg or Moscow would follow. But if the first part of the plan were carried out and Germany reduced France and Belgium to subjection, what would England do?

disintegration of the Austrian Empire was merely a question of time, and that the day was not far distant when we should see a kingdom of Hungary and a kingdom of Bohemia. The Southern Slavs would probably be absorbed by Serbia, the Roumanians of Transylvania by Roumania, and the German provinces of Austria incorporated in Germany. The fact that Germany would then have no Austria to inveigle her into a war about the Balkans would, His Majesty opined, make for peace. I ventured to observe that such a recasting of the map of Europe could hardly be effected without a general war.' (*My Mission to Russia*, vol. i, p. 182.)

While the two Balkan wars were in progress, a few isolated voices had been raised from time to time in the Press in an attempt to make the British public realize the serious danger to the peace of Europe presented by the domestic situation of Austria-Hungary.[1] An eminent journalist, Wickham Steed, *The Times'* correspondent at Vienna, in a work on the Austro-Hungarian monarchy which was widely read, pointed out how enormously it had been weakened by the Serbian victories of 1912 and 1913, and that all the Germans were being drawn closer together in face of the Slavonic peril. In conclusion he suggested the possibility that Austria and Germany might attempt to meet it by embarking on a war with Russia, which if the two Central Empires were victorious would result in their aggrandisement at the cost of Russia, if they were defeated, would mean the end of the Austrian Empire, and perhaps of the German also 'at least in its present form'.[2] It was an interesting prophecy from the pen of the man who at the end of 1913 would take charge of the foreign news department of *The Times* and make the policy of the paper more decisively anti-German than it had been for several months. But if he was determined to champion and make his country champion the cause of the Slavs against the Germans those among his fellow countrymen who had made a special study of the problems affecting the peace of the Continent were by no means unanimously of his opinion. Seton Watson, who of all the English had studied most thoroughly the Slavonic question in Austria-Hungary, was strongly opposed to Pan-Serb ambitions. He regarded the absorption of Croatia and Slovenia in a Greater Serbia of which Belgrade would be the capital as a defeat of the West by the East, that is to say, of civilization by barbarism. A severe critic of the administrative methods employed by Austria and Hungary in Yugo-Slavia he dedicated

[1] See especially in the *Round Table*, June 1913 (vol. iii, pp. 395 sqq.) the excellent article entitled 'The Balkan War and the Balance of Power'.

[2] Henry Wickham Steed, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, 1913, p. 294 (last page but one of the book). He continues, it is true: 'But catastrophic hypotheses are best left out of account in these days of intertwined interests and of armies so colossal that defeat could hardly fail to be attended by revolutions fatal to thrones and to the existing social order; and calm consideration of the complicated factors involved leads rather to the conclusion that the Habsburg Monarchy has but one sure way of escape from its difficulties into a more prosperous and tranquil future—the way of evolution, gradual or rapid as circumstances may permit, towards an internal organization better adapted than the Dual System to the permanent needs of its people.'

his book 'To that Austrian statesman who shall possess the genius and the courage necessary to solve the Southern Slav question.' What solution did the author envisage? Apart from the conquest of Serbia it resembled closely the 'triple system' advocated by the followers of Marshal von Hötzendorff.[1] Other writers went even further. In his book *The War of Steel and Gold* Brailsford attacked Grey's policy for encouraging Russia too much and paralysing the action of Austria in the Balkans. He regretted that she had not been allowed during the last five years to annex Serbia and the greater part of Macedonia.[2] Brailsford no doubt was an extreme anti-capitalist and pacifist. But an eminent publicist of much more moderate opinions, Sir Harry Johnson, a Liberal imperialist and retired colonial governor, professed on Austria's Balkan policy opinions identical with Brailsford's.[3] He even contemplated the possibility of the struggle between the Yugo-Slavs and Austria-Hungary provoking a European war and maintained that in that event British sympathies should be with the Germans against the Russians and French.

Such were the conclusions of those Englishmen who interested themselves in the problem of Austria-Hungary. They were divergent but there can be no doubt that the majority of those who made a special study of the question were sympathetic to German aims in Central and South-Eastern Europe. We must remember that during the years immediately preceding 1914 the Russian empire was regaining in the opinion of the West almost all the prestige it had possessed before the disastrous war with Japan. Once more it was fomenting trouble in Mongolia and in Persia, where the Russian penetration was directly opposing the British. In the Balkans the Czar's Government had displayed a moderation which the Pan-Slavs found intolerable, but it had begun to reassert itself in the affair of Liman von Sanders. Russia was strengthening her army, building Dreadnoughts, and doing everything which lay in the power of her Government to do to persuade Europe

[1] R. W. Seton Watson, *The Southern Slav Question and the Habsburg Monarchy*, 1911, pp. 335 sqq. See by the same author, *Corruption and Reform in Hungary. A Study of Electoral Practice*, 1911. *Absolutism in Croatia*, 1912.

[2] H. N. Brailsford, *The War of Steel and Gold. A Study of the Armed Peace*, 1914, pp. 33–4.

[3] Sir Harry Johnson, *Common Sense in Foreign Policy*, 1913, pp. 48 sqq. It must be added that in the opening pages of his book (pp. 15–16) Sir Harry mentioned among the possible events on the Continent which would justify England in declaring war upon Germany any violation of the independence of Belgium or an attack upon the territorial integrity of France. But for that very reason he disliked the solidarity it was sought to establish between the policy of France and England and the policy of Russia.

that she had banished the peril of revolution. But as she became or appeared to become stronger the question arose whether the maintenance of the European balance of power required a victory of the German or the Russian army in the plains of Hungary and Poland.[1] It was therefore only under considerable difficulties and almost in secret, careful to avoid giving offence to a considerable section of public opinion, whose arguments could not be lightly dismissed, that the Foreign Office remained faithful to the policy of the Triple Entente. We must however remember that only a handful of Englishmen took an interest in these questions of Eastern Europe, that the attitude of the general public towards the Austrian question, as towards the Turkish the year before, was one of indifference, and that its attention was now more completely absorbed by the increasing gravity of the domestic situation.

For in the United—or Disunited—Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland the principle of nationality was operating as disastrously as in Austria-Hungary and in the spring of 1914 the Irish question reached, as we already know, a critical phase. The German military law of 1913 and the French and Russian replies which it provoked had not shaken British apathy. The law had even had the paradoxical result, of which we have already had occasion to speak, of improving Anglo-German relations. The more money Germany spent on her army, the less she could spend on her navy. In this state of somnolent perplexity the British public watched with indifference the Government declare that it was bound by no military pledge to France, couching its declaration in terms sufficiently ambiguous to permit it to maintain contact with the French staff, Lloyd George advocate a *rapproche-*

[1] 'Her (Russia's) efforts to improve her army may distract Germany's attention from naval development—there is no doubt that Russia is spending huge sums on a new fleet. It may well be—though it would be idle to prophesy one way or the other—that in a few years' time the balance of power will be threatened, no longer by Germany but by the advancing strength of Russia. The chief danger then would be no longer the German menace in the North Sea but the Russian advance in Asia Minor, Persia or Northern China.' ('The Balkan War and the Balance of Power,' *Round Table*, June 1913, vol. iii, p. 423.) See further the curious article published in the *Daily Chronicle* of July 29, 1914, on the eve of the Great War, the day after the Austrian declaration of war on Serbia (the writer is the Sir Harry Johnson of whose book we have just spoken): '. . . We should like to see all participants in the great renaissance of Eastern Europe happy and contented and satisfied as to their ambitions. But if they are not, and are about to resort to the arbitrament of arms to adjust their claims, well, it should be no concern of ours, provided it did not lead to two developments—the aggrandisement of Russia in Europe or the defeat of France by Germany, with a consequent German irruption into Belgium and Holland.'

ment with Germany, Churchill reinforce the British fleet, the Parisian crowd cheer King George, and a British squadron on its return from Cronstadt pay an official visit to the Emperor William in Kiel Harbour. Whether it were a question of the social problem at home, of Irish Home Rule, or of the balance of power in Europe the British put their trust more or less consciously in that method of keeping cool and doing nothing which for two centuries of national greatness had served it so well in all matters of domestic policy. Only keep cool and wait till crises settled themselves. A few months' or a few years' patience and everything would come right. Were not the Balkan wars a proof that British *sangfroid* was as successful in foreign as in internal politics? England had set the Powers an example of calm, they had followed it and the Balkan had not become a European war. There was no reason to foresee in the course of the next few months any disturbance equally serious. The British, who wanted to be optimistic, found in the events of 1912 and 1913 excellent reasons to justify their optimism.

10

It was at this moment on June 28 that a wholly unexpected event happened. The Archduke Francis-Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria, visited that day the city of Serajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was believed to favour the annexationist views of Marshal von Hötzendorff, and his visit to Bosnia wore the appearance of a challenge to Belgrade. For he had chosen for a military review the anniversary of the day on which the great Serbia of the Middle Ages had been overthrown by the Turkish army in 1389. While the Prince and his wife were driving through the streets of Serajevo two attempts were made upon their lives, the second of which was successful. The two assassins were Bosnians, but both had come from Serbia, their weapons from Serbian depots. Obviously they were emissaries of a secret society known as the 'Black Hand', which if openly at war with the Government of Belgrade, intimidated and blackmailed it, and the Court in particular. It had been members of this society who only a few years before by the double murder of the last of the Obrenoviches and his wife had seated the Karageorgevitches on the throne. Now once more they were attracting

the attention of the whole of Europe by another double assassination even more sensational than the former.

The Serbs were not popular in England. The crime of 1903 had provoked an outburst of indignant horror. Alone among the sovereigns of Europe King Edward had refused to enter into diplomatic relations with King Peter until he had agreed to banish from his Court the leaders of the plot which had placed him on the throne at the cost of regicide. Only two papers, politically at the opposite poles, expressed after the murder of the Archduke distrust of Austria. One was the Tory *Morning Post*, the other the Labour *Daily Citizen*, a paper with no circulation and the organ of a party which was as yet an opposition with no chance whatever of holding office. With practically no other exceptions the entire Press declared it perfectly justifiable for Austria to require the Serbian Government to take all the necessary steps to prevent the recurrence of similar outrages. They expressed the hope that the latter would take the initiative in opening an inquiry.[1] The direction in which the wind was blowing in England can be gauged from the articles written in July by the demagogue Bottomley for his weekly *John Bull*. For years he had never been weary of demanding the destruction of the German fleet. Now he felt himself in no danger of disgusting his readers when he demanded every week with equal vehemence the annihilation of Serbia.

Was the British public then blind to the possible repercussions of the assassination of June 28; that the double murder might prove the signal for the Slavs of Austria-Hungary to revolt against Austrian and Magyar oppression, and battle be joined between Teutons and Slavs throughout Central Europe? We know that the German Ambassador, Lichnowsky, urged by his superiors to take every step in his power to ensure the neutrality of British statesmen and journalists, never ceased to warn his Government against excessive optimism,[2] and at first sight the

[1] For the views voiced by the Press between the assassination at Serajevo and the declaration of war see the excellent work by Irene Cooper Willis, *How we went into the War, A Study of Liberal Imperialism* [1919]. Jonathan Frank Scott, *Five Weeks. The Surge of Public Opinion on the Eve of the Great War*, 1927, chap. ix; Caroline E. Playne, *The Pre-War Mind in England; an Historical Review*, 1928; and in particular for the policy of *The Times*, H. Wickham Steed, *Through Thirty Years, 1892–1922, A Personal Narrative*, vol. ii, pp. 1 sqq.

[2] Lichnowsky to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, July 14, 1914 (*Die Deutschen Dokumente* . . . vol. i, p. 68), July 15, 1914 (ibid., p. 77).

language used by Grey in his conversations with Lichnowsky during the first fortnight of July seems marked by a certain nervousness. Grey counted on Germany to press a circumspect policy on Vienna and wanted the two Governments of London and Berlin to unite in the same conciliatory action which they had taken with such success on several occasions during the Balkan crisis.

'The greater the risk of war,' Grey informed Lichnowsky on July 9, 'the more closely would I adhere to that policy.'[1] And indeed it was obvious to anyone who understood the situation that the risk was greater than it had ever been during the Balkan wars. It was then a question of conflicts between the Balkan States in which all the Great Powers without exception including Austria declined to be mixed up. Now the 'third Balkan war' so dreaded in London threatened to open with a struggle between a Balkan state and one of the Great Powers. How could the rest be prevented from following Austria's lead? But we have only to look a little closer to see how little at this date Grey realized the gravity of the situation.

His interviews with the German Ambassador after the assassination continued others which had taken place before it and throughout them all his principal concern was to appease the indignation aroused in Berlin by the publication of the negotiations for a naval agreement between England and Russia. No doubt the murder at Serajevo complicated the international situation, but the English were far from ascribing to it the importance we should imagine today. On the very morrow of the assassination the House of Commons held a debate on foreign policy. It was a hurried affair, and the audience scanty and unattentive. The one question which aroused a little more interest than the others was the dispute between England and Russia in Persia.[2]

[1] Sir Edward Grey to Sir H. Rumbold, July 9, 1914 (*British Documents* . . . vol. xi, p. 34 sqq.). The phrase we have quoted is not to be found in Lichnowsky's report of this conversation which he concludes with the following words: 'Generally speaking the minister's mood was one of confidence and in cheerful tones he assured me that he saw no reason to take too tragic a view of the situation' (Lichnowsky to Bethmann-Hollweg, July 9, 1914; *Die Deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruck*, vol. i, p. 52).

[2] *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1914, 5th Series, vol. lxiv, pp. 53 sqq. See especially the following Statement by the pacifist Noel Buxton: 'It is pleasant in a time of considerable international difficulties in many parts of the world to congratulate the Foreign Secretary to-day upon the fact that matters which are likely to be raised are not questions of *haute politique* at all, but they are comparatively minor questions not involving matters of great danger' (ibid., p. 59).

Colonel House was in London. The warlike spirit he had observed in government circles in Berlin even before the murder of the Archduke had caused him serious anxiety, but he was unable to communicate his fears to Grey.[1] And what was true of Grey was true of his subordinates. 'I have my doubts', wrote Sir Arthur Nicolson on July 9, 'as to whether Austria will take any action of a serious character, and I expect the storm will blow over.'[2] The British representative in Sofia to be sure feared another Balkan war in the near future, but by this near future he meant October and what Sir Henry Bax-Ironside expected about October was a declaration of war by Turkey on Greece; Austria would remain at peace so long as the Emperor lived.[3] When after a short holiday Sir Francis Bertie returned to Paris, his instructions mentioned only Albania.[4] President Poincaré paid a visit to the Czar. He was expected to persuade the Russian Government to restrain its agents' encroachments in Persia. And that was all.[5]

The days passed by and the Austrian Government took no action at Belgrade. Tisza addressing the Parliament at Budapest used reassuring language. People were beginning not so much to fear the possible stringency of the Austrian demands as to feel surprise at her longsuffering. They were asking themselves whether Baron von Aehrenthal by his violent stroke in 1908 had not given Europe a false impression of the real power of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and whether now that he had disappeared from the scene it would not prove incapable of meeting the dangers by which it was threatened at home and abroad and begin to break up. Under these circumstances the English did what they most of all wanted to do—stood aside from the racial conflict in the Danube valley. They had sufficient trouble of their own to face when the Irish Catholics and Protestants were arming against each other and the Lords were mutilating so severely the measure of compromise to which the Cabinet had with the

[1] Colonel House to President Wilson, July 31, 1914: '. . . I tried to convey this feeling to Sir Edward Grey and other members of the British Government. They seemed astonished at my pessimistic view and thought that conditions were better than they had been for a long time.' (*The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, vol. i, p. 283).

[2] In a note to a despatch sent by Sir Maurice de Bunsen from Vienna on July 5 (*British Documents* . . . vol. xi, p. 33).

[3] Private letter from Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Arthur Nicolson, July 1914 (ibid., vol. xi, p. 35).

[4] Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey, July 30, 1914 (ibid., vol. xi, p. 230).

[5] Private letter from Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Arthur Nicolson, July 9, 1914 (ibid., vol. xi, p. 39).

greatest difficulty obtained the assent of the Irish Nationalists that they seemed anxious to precipitate the conflict. The country was heading for civil war. How could it think of anything else? In a speech which he delivered on July 17 at a banquet in the city and to which we have already had occasion to allude Lloyd George had taken for his theme peace, domestic and foreign, the 'one thing that is of paramount importance'. But he passed lightly over the questions which concerned peace abroad, reminding his hearers that the international situation had been more serious in 1913 and hinting that, if there were still clouds on the horizon, it was because 'you never get a perfectly blue sky in foreign affairs'. He therefore urged a policy of disarmament and turning to other matters enlarged upon the imminent peril which threatened peace at home—civil war in Ireland complicated by a general revolutionary strike in Great Britain.[1]

II

Two days after this speech an important German newspaper, in fact the unofficial organ of the Government, the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, published a *communiqué* which prepared European opinion for a step to be taken immediately by the Austrian Government. It expressed the wish that the Serbian Government would give Austria the satisfaction due to her and Europe display the same solidarity she had shown during the Balkan crisis and permit the issue between Austria and Serbia to remain localized. Two things therefore were evident; on the one hand that Germany had given *carte blanche* to Austria, on the other that when the German Government invited the British to take joint action for the maintenance of peace as during the Balkan wars, the two Powers did not attach the same sense to the proposition. Let us work together to preserve peace, said Grey, you by urging moderation upon Austria, we by urging it upon Russia. Let us work together, replied Von Jagow: prevent Russia interfering while Austria inflicts a richly deserved chastisement on Serbia.[2]

[1] Speech at the Mansion House, July 17, 1914.

[2] Von Jagow to Prince Lichnowsky, Berlin, July 18, 1914: 'Sir Grey [*sic*] is always speaking of the balance of power to be maintained by the two groups of Powers. He must clearly understand that this balance would be totally destroyed if we abandoned Austria

Then the Foreign Offices began to move. Grey proposed to Petersburg direct negotiations between the Russian and Austrian Governments before the latter had committed itself irretrievably. But the suggestion was not welcomed in Russia and Poincaré, who had just arrived in Petersburg, proposed that the Ambassadors of the Triple Entente should make a joint representation to the Austrian Government. The proposal was immediately rejected in London. For it ran counter to the policy the Foreign Office had consistently pursued for the past two years, never to oppose to each other the two groups, the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance. But all these suggestions and conversations remained secret. It was in vain that *The Times*, in a magnificent leader, began to warn its readers of the danger to which the Austrian policy might within a few days expose the peace of Europe. The public had other preoccupations. The more critical the European situation became, the more critical also became the situation in Ireland. It was on July 21 that the King, in a desperate effort at conciliation, summoned the representatives of the opposing parties, and on the 24th the readers of the British newspapers learned, one after the other, two disastrous pieces of news. In the morning they were informed of the despatch by Austria to Serbia of a list of demands, the last of which was tantamount to Serbia's renunciation of her independence, to be accepted unconditionally within forty-eight hours. A refusal would mean war. In the afternoon, they were informed of the failure of the Buckingham Palace Conference, which seemed to signify that Protestants and Catholics had no other solution of the Irish problem than the arbitrament of force. On the following day, a Saturday, the Serbian Government returned the Austrian a reply as conciliatory as was possible without surrendering the rights of a sovereign state. But it was not the unconditional acceptance which Austria demanded and the latter, as had been expected, immediately broke off diplomatic relations with Serbia. On Sunday the gun-running at Howth occurred with its loss of life. Europe was hastening towards a general war, Ireland towards civil war.

Taken thus unawares in the middle of so serious a domestic crisis by an even more serious international crisis, we might have

and left her to be destroyed by Russia and would be very considerably shaken by a world war. If therefore he is logical and his intentions honourable he must support us and localize the conflict.' (*Die Deutschen Dokumente* . . . vol. i, p. 100.)

expected confusion to prevail in the counsels of the British Government. There was nothing of the kind. The Cabinet, or rather an 'inner Cabinet' composed of Asquith, Grey, and Churchill—perhaps also *sub rosa* of Lord Haldane—took with all the necessary decision the military and diplomatic measures the situation required.

In place of the extensive manœuvres in the North Sea carried out in former years Churchill had adopted this year a programme, less costly but equally instructive, by which the third squadron was mobilized and at the same time the three squadrons which made up the home fleet were concentrated in home waters. 20,000 reservists obeyed the summons and their period of service which began on July 13 ended on the 25th. The German naval command, anxious not to do anything to alarm the British Admiralty and prevent at such a critical juncture the dispersal of their immense force had ordered the German fleet to make no movement[1] and on the 26th the German spies were able to inform the Government which employed them that its strategy had been so far successful that the 20,000 reservists had returned home.[2] But the first and second squadrons remained concentrated at Plymouth. Acting in concert with Grey, Churchill inserted a *communiqué* in the papers on Monday morning which informed England, Germany, and the entire world that the first squadron would not leave Portland and that the vessels composing the second squadron would remain at their bases within call of their crews.[3] England was thus the first of the Great Powers with the exception of Austria to make ostensible preparations for war.

Meanwhile Grey proposed to the various Governments that the Powers not directly concerned in the dispute, Germany and Italy in the Triple Alliance, England and France in the Triple Entente should make an attempt to mediate. On Saturday he suggested

[1] In contravention of the Emperor's instructions. Bethmann-Hollweg to the Emperor July 25, 1914 (*Die Deutschen Dokumente* . . . vol. i, p. 193.) The Same to the Same, July 26, 1914 (ibid., vol. i, p. 211).

[2] Memorandum by the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Berlin, July 25, 1914: The naval attaché in London—reports: the fleet dispersed according to plan. So far as he knows no extraordinary movements. (ibid., vol. i, p. 187.) The German naval attaché in London to the Minister of Marine, July 26, 1914 (ibid., vol. i, p. 211).

[3] For the text of the *communiqué* see Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis 1911–1914*, p. 198. Grey prudently explained to Benckendorff that in preventing the dispersal of the fleet he had in view only diplomatic action. (Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan, July 27, 1914; *British Documents* . . . vol. xi, p. 211.)

joint intervention by the four Powers at Petersburg and Berlin.[1] On Sunday accepting a slightly different proposal put forward by Sazonov,[2] he proposed at Nicolson's advice[3] a conference, to be held in London, of the German, French, and Italian Ambassadors and himself to explore an amicable solution of the dispute. While the conference was in session Austria must suspend all military operations. Rome accepted the suggestion. Paris also, through the acting Premier, for the minister who was at once Premier and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Viviani, was at sea hurrying home from Cronstadt with President Poincaré and out of touch with events. But Berlin was hostile. This return to the methods employed a year before during the Balkan crisis would involve treating not only Serbia but Austria-Hungary itself as a 'Balkan' state under the tutelage of the West.[4] Berlin was extricated from the difficulty by Petersburg. On the morning of the 27th the French Ambassador, Paléologue, proposed to the British Ambassador Buchanan, on behalf of Sazonov a different method of procedure —direct conversations between Russia and Austria-Hungary.[5] The German Government welcomed the new suggestion and made use of it to reject the British proposal.

Grey's diplomacy had suffered an initial defeat. It suffered a second, still more serious, the declaration of war by Austria on Serbia, of which the Foreign Office was officially informed during the night between Tuesday the 28th and Wednesday the 29th and which was followed immediately by the bombardment of Belgrade. Again the British Government gave the necessary orders. In pursuance of a decision reached on the Tuesday morning and to which Churchill had obtained Grey's assent the fleet sailed through the Straits of Dover during the night with all fires banked and took up its station in Scottish waters at Scapa Flow in face of the German fleet. On Wednesday Churchill despatched to all the commands the warning telegram they had been expecting since Monday ordering them to make all the necessary preparations

[1] Sir Edward Grey to Sir George Buchanan, July 25, 1914 (*British Documents* . . . vol. xi, pp. 86–7).

[2] Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey, July 25, 1914 (ibid., vol. xi, p. 93).

[3] Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey, July 26, 1914 (ibid., vol. xi, p. 100).

[4] Out of regard for Austrian susceptibilities Grey expressed to the Austrian Ambassador his regret at having used the word 'conference' and explained that he had in mind only meetings of ambassadors, similar to those held in 1913 (Telegraphic despatches from Mensdorff, July 28, 1914, and from Berchtold to Mensdorff same date (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. viii, pp. 839, 941).

[5] Sir George Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey (*British Documents* . . . vol. xi, p. 125).

to begin war as soon as the order was received.[1] At the same time he persuaded the Cabinet to take all the measures which in virtue of decisions reached some years before by the Committee of Imperial Defence were involved in the proclamation of a precautionary period, that is to say to issue a series of instructions addressed to the authorities concerned throughout the Empire ordering immediate preparations for war.[2] Grey now sent for Lichnowsky and informed him, 'in a quite private and friendly way' and, without waiting for the Ambassador to question him on the subject, that 'the situation was very grave' and that if Germany, and in consequence France, should be involved he must not conclude from the friendly tone of their interview that England would stand aside. If England believed that her interests required her intervention she would intervene at once and her decision would be no less rapid than those of the other Governments.[3]

12

On the evening therefore of Wednesday, July 29, the British Government had, it would seem, done everything in its power, openly and in secret, from the naval and diplomatic standpoint alike to prepare for war and confront hostile powers with the prospect of her entry into the war. But days of hesitation followed. Only four—but to those who lived through them they seemed an eternity. We must be clear as to the nature and reasons of this halt on the brink of the abyss.

What did most to mislead public opinion, not only in England, but on the Continent was the imperturbable calm, the persistent *sangfroid* which the British public maintained, when the entire condition of Europe, political, financial, and military, proclaimed

[1] Winston S. Churchill. *The World Crisis*, pp. 206–7.

[2] Winston S. Churchill, ibid., p. 208; H. H. Asquith, *The Genesis of War*, p. 184 (cf. for the import of the steps taken pp. 118, 136). Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson's *Diary*, July 28 (29?), 1914: 'The Russians have ordered the mobilisation of 16 Corps. The Austrians are mobilising 12 Corps. The Germans and French remain quiet. At 3 p.m. a note came to Douglas from Asquith ordering the "Precautionary Period". This we did, I don't know why we are doing it, because there is nothing moving in Germany. We shall see. Anyhow it is more like business than I expected of this government.' (Major-General Sir C. E. Callwell. Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson. 1927, vol. i, p. 152.)

[3] Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen, July 29, 1914 (*British Documents*. . . vol. xi, p. 182). Prince von Lichnowsky to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, July 29, 1914 (*Die Deutschen Dokumente* . . . vol. ii, p. 86).

the catastrophe already begun. The annual holiday season had commenced; for the workers the week-end would be exceptionally prolonged by the fact that the following Monday was a bank holiday, and on Friday, and even on Saturday, while Russia, Austria, Germany, and France were arming English holiday-makers of every class were hastening to the stations and the Channel ports in search of rest and pleasure. It was not surprising that foreign observers concluded that the country had determined to stand aside from the Continental war, and that Grey, who at the beginning of the week had taken an extremely pessimistic view of the situation, should shrink from taking action too far in advance of an indifferent public opinion and consider how best to restrain the warlike zeal of the Government departments, and that pacifist doctrinaires misinterpreted this calm as a determination to maintain peace at any price and hugged the illusion that they had the entire country on their side.

Certain signs however enable us to interpret more correctly the temper of the nation. The minority of writers in the Press who regarded it as inevitable that England should enter the war in support of Russia and France expresssed themelves cautiously and took care not to adopt a censorious attitude towards the Cabinet. On the other hand the measures of preparation for naval warfare which had been already adopted by the Admiralty on Monday morning had aroused no protest from the leading Liberal organs, and the more direct measures taken by the Cabinet on Wednesday were not made public by the indiscretion of any journalist. Finally, when the Irish Amending Bill came up for discussion on Thursday, all parties—the Conservatives, Liberals, and Labour members of Great Britain, the Ulstermen and the Irish Nationalists—agreed to adjourn the debate indefinitely, because, Asquith explained, it was essential that the country, 'which has no interest of its own directly at stake, should present a united front, and be able to speak and act with the authority of an undivided nation'.[1] In the past no doubt there had been occasions when England had displayed a more belligerent temper. In 1898 and 1899 for example public opinion had pushed the Government into war. But the country had now returned to its normal state. Both instinctively and deliberately the average Englishman distrusts the imagination.

[1] H. of C., July 30, 1914 (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1914; 5th Series, vol. lxv, p. 1601).

He does not want to redouble a danger by the dread of it. So long as the situation was in the hands of the diplomatists, it was a duty to believe that they were sincere in their efforts to preserve peace, a duty moreover to believe success possible and to contribute to that possibility by giving the British Government the assistance of calm and silence.

But this calm and silence were carried so far that they became a hindrance instead of a help to the Government. There were moments when Grey wondered whether it would be possible to arouse the British public from its slumber and rally it to the cause of the mother country by declaring war. This was one reason for hesitation and even if it had not existed there were a host of others, some common to all the Governments alike, others peculiar to the British.

There was in the first place a fear which all the Governments felt and which made them shrink back when the moment arrived to declare war, the fear of revolution. In the latter part of the nineteenth century Karl Marx's great disciple and friend Friedrich Engels had foretold 'a world war' provoked by 'Prussia-Germany' 'of unsuspected length and violence' during which 'eight to ten million soldiers would slaughter each other and strip Europe bare like a swarm of locusts'. He predicted that 'the artificial structure of commerce, industry, and finance would be destroyed and the irreparable chaos result in general bankruptcy; the old states and their traditional ideas would be overthrown, crowns would roll by dozens on the pavement and no one would pick them up, and the universal exhaustion would provide the conditions under which the working class would at last achieve victory'.[1] Now, when Europe was at last threatened by the immediate prospect of a general war, many people, judging from a considerable number of signs—the first Russian revolution, the propaganda of revolutionary syndicalism, the growth of Marxian Socialism in Germany—were inclined to predict a world revolution in its train. On the very eve of the Austrian ultimatum, while President Poincaré was visiting the Emperor of Russia, serious rioting broke out at Petersburg, with casualties extending to loss of life and the German Ambassador remarked with amusement that while the band of the Imperial Guard greeted Poincaré at Krasnoié-Sélo

[1] Preface to a pamphlet by Borkheim 1887 (quoted by Lenin). (Report on the Modifications in the Party Programme, March 8, 1918, *Works*, vol. xv, p. 149—French. tr.)

with the strains of the 'Marseillaise' the workers of the Petersburg suburbs were receiving a charge of the Cossack cavalry to the same accompaniment.[1] In Great Britain the syndicalist leaders had indulged in too many outbursts of anti-patriotism not to alarm the ruling class. Might not the reply to a war or the economic crisis it would immediately provoke be that general strike of railwaymen, transport workers and miners which had been threatened for months past? And must we not attribute to considerations of this kind a share in the explicit declaration of neutrality made on July 26 by King George to Prince Henry of Prussia? May not the court have shrunk at first from being drawn into a revolutionary war opened by a regicide? 'Be careful,' Grey told the Austrian Ambassador, Mensdorff, when on July 23 the Ambassador came to prepare him for the despatch of the ultimatum, 'a general war would be accompanied or followed by a complete collapse of European credit and industry in these days in great industrial States. This would mean a state of things worse than that of 1848.'[2] 'In the present temper of labour,' Lord Morley warned his colleagues a few days later almost in the same words, 'the atmosphere of war cannot be friendly to order, in a democratic system that is verging on the humour of '48.'[3]

[1] Count von Pourtales to Bethmann-Hollweg. July 24, 1914 (*Die Deutschen Dokumente* . . . vol. i, p. 207). Cf. Despatch by Count Berchtold, September 7–8, 1912: 'In Baltic-Port he had received the impression that Russia would pursue a peaceful policy for many years to come. Herr Kokovtsov had determined to carry out an extensive economic programme. Moreover the Russian Premier was convinced of the very serious dangers which in view of the social situation in Russia foreign complications would involve.' (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. iii, p. 415.) See further Prince von Bülow's *Memoirs* (French trans., vol. ii, p. 291): 'In May 1914—in Rome I asked Kokovtsov the former Russian Prime Minister who had just quitted office, if he believed there would be a war and he answered without hesitation: "War? No. Unless you compel us, we will not go to war. But I believe a revolution in Russia not only possible but likely."'

[2] Sir Edward Grey to Sir Maurice de Bunsen, July 23, 1914 (*British Documents* . . . vol. xi, p. 70). Cf. Mensdorff telegram from London, July 23, 1914: 'He (Sir Edward Grey) recognized the difficulty of our position and spoke very seriously of the gravity of the situation. If four great powers, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Russia and France became involved in war, the consequence for all intents and purposes would be the bankruptcy of Europe. No more credit would be obtainable, and the centres of industry would be plunged into a state of chaos, so that in many countries it would cease to matter which side was victorious when so many existing institutions had been swept away.' (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. viii, p. 603.) For another summary of the same conversation also by Mensdorff see his despatch of July 29. (*Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* . . . vol. viii, p. 878.) Mensdorff concluded his despatch with the remark: 'It made a great impression on my German colleague, a nervous man at the best of times.'

[3] Viscount Morley. *Memorandum on Resignation*, p. 5. Cf. H. of C., August 3, 1914, Wedgewood's speech: 'Starvation is coming in this country and the people are not the docile serfs that they were a hundred years ago. They are not going to put up with starvation in this country. When it comes you will see something far more important than a European War—you will see a revolution.' (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1914; 5th Series, vol. lxv, p. 1838.)

But to this fear of revolution and revolutionaries which the British Government shared with the government of every other country there was added in England another anxiety which no Continental government felt to the same degree, dread of seeing the machinery of exchange paralysed and that vast republic of commerce and finance collapse which in peace time knew nothing of frontiers and was conterminous with the globe. On Tuesday the 28th the crisis which had already played havoc with all the exchanges of Europe reached the Stock Exchange and after it closed prices fell still further on the news that Austria had declared war on Serbia. After a slight recovery on Wednesday morning the crisis went from bad to worse until on Friday the Stock Exchange Committee decided to close the Exchange until further notice. The supreme scandal had actually occurred which Norman Angell had pronounced improbable, indeed practically impossible, in the West—warlike passion had triumphed over organized financial interests. It was, it is true, an infection caught from the East. Might not England prove the last bulwark of Western civilization against the plague? Had she not still time to take the necessary steps to arrest its ravages at the Straits of Dover? While the British public displayed to a tormented Europe the mask of their impassivity, the business world took action. The aged Lord Rothschild led the movement. For years, the consistent champion of an *entente* between England and Germany,[1] he tried to bring pressure to bear upon the editorial staff of *The Times*, and upon his relatives in Paris,[2] and he wrote to the Emperor William a letter of entreaty, whose naïveté is heartrending.[3] And in addition to all this in an attempt to influence the British Government he put himself at the head of a deputation from the City, which called on Lloyd George on Friday morning to urge him by preserving the neutrality of England at all costs to save the country from disaster and possibly enable her to stretch out a helping hand to the Continent.

[1] 'For a period extending over nearly forty years I have been personally acquainted with the different German ambassadors of the time, and this personal intimacy has allowed me on more than one occasion to be of service to the respective governments. What have we . . . not got in common with Germany? Nothing perhaps except their army and our navy. But a combination of the most powerful military nation with the most powerful naval nation ought to be such as to command the respect of the whole world, and ensure universal peace.' (Articles entitled 'England and Germany' in the collection which bears the same name and which was published in 1912, pp. 21–3.)

[2] Henry Wickham Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, vol. ii, p. 8.

[3] *Die Deutschen Dokumente* . . . vol. iii, pp. 77–8. The Emperor appended the note: 'An old and honoured acquaintance of mine! Between 75 and 80 years old!'

The choice of leader aroused protest. The *Morning Post* and *The Times* depicted the crisis on the Stock Exchange as a device, engineered by the German-Jewish banks, to create a panic in the business world and paralyse the diplomatic and military action of the Government, and at the Foreign Office itself Sir Eyre Crowe repeated the legend.[1] But Lloyd George and Grey[2] were impressed by Lord Rothschild's action; if the City was opposed to to war, would the country be in favour of it?

We may add that in shrinking from the final decision the British Government did but give evidence of the same alarm which all the Governments of the Great Powers, with the exception of Austria, felt at this juncture at the prospect of war as such with its horrors and dangers. The Emperor William, after urging Austria forward for months, particularly during the last few weeks and still scornful, while he cruised off the coast of Norway, of Count Berchtold's delays, suddenly took alarm and returned in haste to Berlin to embarrass the more warlike of his ministers by his nervousness. President Poincaré, who in Petersburg before the Austrian ultimatum had done everything in his power to draw closer the bond which united France with Russia and had spoken in haughty terms to the Austrian Ambassador, had no sooner returned to his native country after the ultimatum when face to face with the immediate prospect of war he too became anxious and timid. Grey, the impassive architect of the ambiguous system of *ententes*, lost his impassivity when brutal realities compelled him to speak in terms which could not be misunderstood.[3] In every capital the same dialogue was held between the chiefs of the army, the mouthpieces of fate, who demanded mobilization and the civil rulers who revolted against it and would fain believe themselves still free to decide their course of action. And everywhere they submitted to fate, in Russia first, then in Germany, then in France, and finally in England. Is it surprising that England was the last to submit? On the contrary, should we not be surprised that her decision followed the French so closely? For

[1] Memorandum by Sir Eyre Crowe, July 31, 1914 (*British Documents* . . . vol. xi, p. 228).

[2] See Grey's remarks to Paul Cambon on the 31st: 'The commercial and financial situation was exceedingly serious; there was danger of a complete collapse that would involve us and every one else in ruin; and it was possible that our standing aside might be the only means of preventing a complete collapse of European credit, in which we should be involved. This might be a paramount consideration in deciding our attitude (Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie, July 31, 1914: ibid., vol. xi, pp. 226–27).

[3] Harold Nicolson, *Sir Arthur Nicolson, First Lord Carnock*, pp. 419, 422.

her position was not the same as that of France. France had no choice but to prepare with more or less haste, and more or less efficiency for the inevitable day when Germany would declare war upon her. It was on the other hand certain that Germany would never declare war on England. She would not allow Russia to crush Austria-Hungary and had made up her mind to crush France before attacking Russia. But she needed the neutrality of England. It was for the latter to abandon it, if she dared, by taking the responsibility of declaring war. She would take it, it was inevitable that she should: but it is one thing to submit to fate, another to make oneself fate's active accomplice.

13

How are we to summarize the history of these breathless days? On the evening of Wednesday the 29th, the very day on which the news of the bombardment of Belgrade reached London, the Foreign Office was officially informed that the Russian Government had decided upon a partial mobilization, while still holding out against the wishes of the army which demanded a general mobilization. On the 30th vague reports were received from Germany that mobilization had begun or was at any rate imminent. On the 31st in the late afternoon the Foreign Office was informed, almost simultaneously, that Russia had ordered a general mobilization, that Austria had done the same, and that Germany had declared 'a state of danger of war' which constituted a preliminary mobilization. At the same time, the German Government despatched a double ultimatum, to Russia, calling upon her to revoke within eighteen hours the order to mobilize and to France, requiring her to pledge herself, within the same interval, to remain neutral. In case of refusal, war would be declared on both fronts. On Saturday August 1, almost at the same moment, Germany and France ordered mobilization. Shortly afterwards, Germany declared war on Russia.

Meanwhile, British diplomacy, though steadily retreating, persisted in seeking a peaceful solution of the dispute between Austria and Serbia. The Austrian army could no longer be prevented from occupying Belgrade. Even so, let the conquest go no further and Belgrade be occupied merely as a pledge until Serbia had accepted

the Austrian terms and then be evacuated. It was no longer possible to hope that the Austrian army would be content with the occupation of Belgrade. Let it then advance farther but let Austria promise to respect in the last resort the sovereignty of Serbia. The German Government gave an official promise to England not to annex any European territory of France in the event of victory, to respect the neutrality of Holland, and to restore to Belgium her territory intact, if she allowed the German army to cross it. On these terms England had only to pledge herself to remain neutral and 'a general pact of neutrality' might be concluded between the two nations. Grey refused even to consider these promises. But three days later he aroused vain hopes in the mind of the German Emperor and his Chancellor by letting it be known that, if only Germany would abstain from attacking France, England would not intervene. On Thursday, Paul Cambon called at Downing Street to remind him of the letters exchanged in October 1912, and the undertaking then given by the British Government to act in concert with the French and deliberate in common upon the joint measures to be adopted by both Powers if the peace of Europe were seriously endangered. The following day, when the question had been discussed by the Cabinet, Grey replied that the Government could not at the moment bind itself by any pledge. The same evening a special messenger brought King George an autograph letter from President Poincaré calling upon England to come to the aid of France in her danger. A long and courteous, but guarded, reply ended with the words: 'Events change so quickly that it is impossible to foresee their future developments.'

They changed quickly indeed. The deputation from the City to Lloyd George on Friday was in truth the first sign that the champions of neutrality were beginning to perceive that they no longer had the entire country behind them. And their anxiety must have been increased when they saw the Secretary for War calling up the special reserve, armed sentries making their appearance wherever there were depots or railway bridges and level crossings to be guarded,[1] and the villages along the coast emptied of their

[1] Lord Ullswater, *A Speaker's Commentary*, vol. i, p. 166. Cf. Sir Arthur Griffith Boscawen, *Memories*, p. 167: 'Sir James Grierson had arranged to come and see us at work on the following Wednesday and lunch in Mess; but when Wednesday morning came I received a message from him that things looked so threatening that he was obliged to go to the War Office. On the following Saturday precautionary measures were being adopted and I received an order to send a detachment off at once to guard the seaplane station at

fishermen whom the Admiralty had called up by what amounted to a secret mobilization.[1] On Friday, in contravention of Grey's express desire, hitherto strictly observed, that there should be no collective demonstration on the question of war, a number of Members of Parliament organized in the lobbies of the House of Commons a demonstration in favour of neutrality. But it was a feeble affair.[2] On Saturday the advocates of peace at any price took more definite action. Two committees to organize propaganda on behalf of neutrality were formed. They drew up two manifestoes for which they secured a number of important signatures among the pacifist intelligentsia.[3] Would these signatories succeed in rousing the opinion of the country against the war party? Perhaps with the simplicity characteristic of the English propagandist they thought so. But it was very late in the day.

On Friday, the most impetuous member of the Cabinet, Churchill, exasperated by his colleagues' calm, made overtures to Bonar Law for the formation of a Coalition Cabinet in the event of a split among the Liberals. Bonar Law however still hung back and would negotiate only with the Prime Minister in person. But in the afternoon of the following day, Saturday August 1, the Opposition leaders, hastily summoned by a group of alarmed supporters, hurried back from the country and renouncing their week-end met at Lansdowne House to concert a joint approach to the Government. A letter was composed and despatched to the Prime Minister on Sunday morning in which the Opposition promised him its unreserved support in the crisis through which the country was passing.[4] Its timely receipt strengthened Asquith's

Westgate.' L. J. Maxse, 'Retrospect and Reminiscence' (*National Review*, vol. lxxi, p. 746): 'The organizers of the British Expeditionary Force were decidedly "doing their bit" all the more because a genius among them had invented the phrase "precautionary period" which permitted certain measures to be taken on the *ipse dixit* of the Secretary of State, without reference to the Cabinet and without a civilian realizing how important they were when time was the only thing that mattered.' For these measures of preliminary mobilization see further Robert Burden Haldane, *An Autobiography*, p. 276.

[1] Stephen Reynolds to Miss Jane Reynolds, August 1, 1914: 'I expect you are very startled and worried over these threatenings of war. It has hit us very hard here: for the British mobilization—newspapers to the contrary—is undoubtedly very complete; all our navy people are at sea and we don't know where.' (*Letters of Stephen Reynolds*, p. 191.)

[2] Christopher Addison, *Politics from Within*, 1911–1918, vol. i, p. 37.

[3] Irene Cooper Willis, *How we went into the War. A Study of Liberal Imperialism*, p. 61.

[4] Lord Beaverbrook, *Politicians and the War*, 1914–1916, pp. 22 sqq.—also for the circumstances which led up to this step see L. S. Maxse 'Retrospect and Reminiscence' (*National Review*, August 1918, vol. lxxi, pp. 745 sqq.). Cf. Charles Roux, *Trois Ambassades françaises à la veille de la guerre*, pp. 43–52, a lively account, unfortunately damaged by inaccuracies of detail, which on this point affords Maxse's account the interesting support of the author's personal recollections.

position at a decisive moment. For that same morning the ministers were informed at a meeting of the Cabinet that Churchill with the approval of the Premier and some of his colleagues had taken the responsibility of ordering the mobilization of the fleet. The majority of the Cabinet approved the step.[1] The partisans of neutrality who only a few days, perhaps even a few hours before, had cherished the illusion that the majority of the Government was of their opinion announced their intention to resign.

Who were they? John Burns, a self-opinionated man and perhaps even more anti-French than pacifist. Lord Morley, a man of less violent temper who was obliged to recognize that the arguments of the war party were not always easy to answer and who disclaimed any desire to persuade his younger colleagues to follow his example. Nevertheless, an heir of Gladstone's policy and a veteran of peace, the old man made it a point of honour not to take part in a war Cabinet in which he would hamper than rather help his colleagues.[2] Neither of the two had the necessary prestige to become the leader of a Radical opposition against a Liberal Cabinet which had become a War Cabinet. Nor had Sir John Simon who adopted their position, a skilful barrister, and an active politician but not a great statesman. But for a few hours the pacifists thought they had found a leader in the person of Lloyd George.

At the beginning of the week Lloyd George is said to have inclined to the side of Grey and Churchill and had seemed disposed to adopt once more the belligerent attitude he had assumed once before, three years earlier, at the time of the Agadir crisis. But how could he forget that in the interval and indeed down to the very eve of the crisis provoked by the Austrian ultimatum[3] he had

[1] Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis, 1911–1914*, p. 217.

[2] 'What should I be doing in a War Ministry?' Words used by Morley on September 13, 1914, and reported by J. H. Morgan. (John Viscount Morley, *An Appreciation and some Reminiscences*, p. 42.).

[3] See his speech in the House of Commons on July 23, during the debate on the third reading of the Finance Bill: 'It is very difficult for our nation to arrest this very terrible development' [of armaments]. 'You cannot do it . . . I realize that, but the encouraging symptom which I observe is that the movement against it is a cosmopolitan one and an international one. Whether it will bear fruit this year or next year, that I am not sure of, but I am certain that it will come. I can see signs, distinct signs, of reaction throughout the world. Take a neighbour of ours. Our relations are very much better than they were a few years ago. There is none of that snarling which we used to see, more especially in the Press of those two great, I will not say rival nations, but two great Empires. The feeling is better altogether between them. They begin to realize they can co-operate for common ends and that the points of co-operation are greater and more numerous and more important than the points of possible controversy.' (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1914, 5th Series, vol. lxv, pp. 727–8.)

been the champion of a *rapprochement* with Germany and disarmament. It was therefore only natural that on Friday he should have been affected by the deputation from the City and made himself its advocate in the Cabinet. An eye witness describes him following with his thumb the course of the Meuse Valley on a map of Belgium and asking his colleagues if it were really worth while going to war to prevent the German army taking that route.[1] Then he appears once more to have hesitated. On Saturday he denied that in laying the arguments of the City financiers before the Cabinet he had intended to make them his own, and his frequent talks with Churchill alarmed Lord Morley.[2] His moral repute had been shaken by the Marconi scandal, his great Insurance Act had aroused inevitable dissatisfaction, his programme of land reform was hanging fire, his Budget for the current year had just ended in a fiasco, and the Irish crisis would involve for him, as for other English statesmen, nothing but mortification. The unexpected outbreak of a great European war opened new prospects in which he must take his bearings within a few hours. It was an anxious problem for a man of his imaginative and impressionable temperament, a decision in which his career as well as his conscience was at stake. On Sunday morning he joined Burns, Morley, and Simon in upholding the policy of neutrality.

The same evening, when the Cabinet reassembled, Burns definitely resigned. At Asquith's request Lord Morley consented to keep the matter open until Monday morning. Next day he resigned. But Simon, and what was a more serious blow for the supporters of neutrality, Lloyd George, remained in the Cabinet. There was no longer in any real sense a Liberal split. There were simply two resignations from the Cabinet, whose importance was moral, rather than political and a third, Charles Trevelyan's, in the subordinate ranks of the Ministry. The great Liberal organs continued for a day longer to kick against the pricks. But the entire party was being swept along by the current which was bearing the nation into war.

[1] Lord Beaverbrook, *Politicians and the War*, p. 29.

[2] His biographer, J. Hugh Edwards, depicts him writing on Saturday evening a letter to one of his fellow ministers in which he protested with the utmost vigour against the entry of England into the war and then keeping the letter in his pocket as the result of a conversation with the Belgian minister who had suddenly converted him to the cause of war. But is not the incident misdated and should it not be placed on the evening of Sunday, August 2? (J. Hugh Edwards, *The Life of David Lloyd George*, vol. iv, p. 211.)

The best way to explain this decision, made almost instantaneously by millions, will perhaps be to go back to the conversations between Grey and Cambon on Friday. 'Up to the present', Grey declared 'we did not feel, and public opinion did not feel, that any treaties or other obligations of this country were involved.' But he added that 'further developments might alter this situation,' and that the preservation of the neutrality of Belgium might prove an important factor, deciding England to enter the war.[1] And almost immediately after Cambon left him he officially asked the two Governments of Berlin and Paris for a pledge to respect Belgian neutrality. Paris gave it at once, Berlin refused. England was therefore morally, if not even juridically, bound to declare war on Germany. Nevertheless, on Saturday when Lichnowsky asked Grey whether, if Germany gave an undertaking not to violate Belgian neutrality, England would promise to remain neutral, he replied: 'I cannot say that; our hands are still free.'[2] For he had just seen Cambon who had pressed him even more insistently than the day before. Moreover, an exceedingly close tie united the French and British navies. France, relying on her agreement with England, had transferred her entire navy to the Mediterranean, leaving the defence of her northern coast to the British fleet. How then could England without dishonour, indeed without confessing that she was no longer a first-class power, allow her fleet to look on while the German navy made itself master of the Channel, sank the French mercantile marine, and bombarded the French ports? This was the question Grey laid before his colleagues on Sunday morning and it was his answer to it which secured the assent of the majority against the still formidable opposition of a group of dissidents of which Lloyd George seemed likely to take the lead. Was this then the immediate cause of England's entrance into the war? But next day Sir Edward Grey was informed that the German Government which had declared war on France would undertake not to allow its men-of-

[1] Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie July 30, 1914 (*British Diplomatic Documents* . . . vol. xi, p. 227).

[2] Sir Edward Grey to Sir Edward Goschen, August 1914 (*British Documents* . . . vol. xi, pp. 260–61). Cf. Prince Lichnowsky to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, August 1, 1914, who however adds in conclusion: 'He returned constantly to the question of Belgian neutrality which in his opinion would in any case play a very important part.' (*Die Deutschen Dokumente* . . . vol. iii, pp. 89–90.)

war to enter the Channel, and England declared war all the same.[1] We are therefore driven back to the conclusion that the factor which determined irrevocably the patriotic insurgence of the nation was in fact the despatch on Sunday evening of the German ultimatum to Belgium, followed on Monday morning by the appeal of the King of the Belgians to the King of England, asking for his diplomatic intervention. But we must understand why the German invasion of Belgium possessed this decisive importance.

In the first place, the violation of Belgian neutrality by the German army, if it enabled Germany to win in France a Napoleonic victory, would mean, whatever pledges the German Government might have given, the annihilation of Belgium as a nation. The war therefore in the West assumed from the very first the character it possessed in the Balkans and the Danube valley of a war in which the principle of nationality was at stake. There was, however, a difference between western and south-eastern Europe. In the latter case, the nation Austria was preparing to destroy was a focus of rebellion which sought by revolution and assassination to liberate the Yugo-Slavs at present subject to Hungarian or German rule—in other words, to change the existing territorial arrangement. In the west on the contrary the nation attacked was innocent of any annexationist ambitions or intrigues against Germany and its existence guaranteed by international treaties, constituted in the fullest sense an integral part of the European territorial arrangement. To go to the assistance of Belgium was therefore to embark upon a conservative not a revolutionary war, a war to protect at once the principle of nationality, the established order, and the sanctity of treaties. But if Belgium had not been so close to the British coast would England have been stirred so powerfully, or rather would she ever have guaranteed Belgian neutrality? If the English were disposed to regard the independence of Belgium as the keystone of the European balance of power, it was because her very existence was in a sense a masterpiece of British diplomacy. By creating Belgium England had

[1] H. of C., August 3, 1914, Sir Edward Grey's speech: '. . . Things move very hurriedly from hour to hour. Fresh news comes in, and I cannot give this in a very formal way; but I understand that the German Government would be prepared, if we would pledge ourselves to neutrality, to agree that the fleet would not attack the Northern Coast of France. I have only heard that shortly before I came to the House, but it is far too narrow an engagement for us. And, Sir, there is the more serious consideration—becoming more serious every hour—there is the question of the neutrality of Belgium.' (*Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1914; 5th Series, vol. lxv, p. 1818.)

intended to make it finally impossible for the greatest European power—France formerly, Germany at present—to occupy Antwerp and thus permanently threaten the mouth of the Thames with its navy. The Belgian question had further complicated a situation already bristling with thorny problems, the south-eastern problem of nationality, the western problem of armed peace, and the naval rivalry between England and Germany. British foreign policy was less concerned than one might suppose to preserve the balance of power in Europe. What she would not permit—and the entire nation was instinctively of the same mind—was that the strongest military power in Europe, now also the strongest naval power on the Continent, should endanger England's naval supremacy by establishing what would amount to a European balance of power at sea.

On Monday morning the Government decided to follow up the mobilization of the navy by mobilizing the army. Lord Haldane offered to return to the War Office, at which for six years he had accomplished so much for military reorganization. The Premier, whom a political accident had placed at the War Office, was delighted to make way for him. Did Haldane wish, as has often been said and is possible in spite of his denials, to become once more the official Secretary of State for War? Could he have failed to understand that his famous visit to Berlin rendered him suspect to the public? Nevertheless, from the strictly professional point of view he was perhaps the only man who could save the War Office from the confusion which prevailed. For at the very moment of mobilization no one at the War Office, it would appear, knew what use to make of the men being called to the colours, whether they should be despatched immediately to France, or kept for imperial defence or whether the plan long cherished by the Admiralty should be adopted, the fleet despatched to win a new Trafalgar and an invasion organized at some point on the German coast.[1] One thing at least was certain, there would be war.

[1] According to Lord Beaverbrook (*Politicians and the War*, pp. 43 sqq.), even Haldane hesitated to order the despatch of the expeditionary force. But this is flatly contradicted by Lord Grey of Fallodon (Sir Edward Grey) in his speech at Fallodon on August 23, 1928: 'When the crisis came he alone among the civilians, according to my recollection, was at once unreservedly for sending the whole of the Expeditionary Force abroad immediately, showing himself to be as prompt and courageous in action as he had been energetic and wise in preparation.' It is also contradicted by J. H. Morgan, an intimate friend of Lord Haldane, who in an article entitled 'The Riddle of Lord Haldane' (*Quarterly*

This was what Grey explained in the afternoon to the House of Commons. His speech, cool, restrained, and devoid of rhetoric won the almost unanimous assent of the House. A handful of pacifists, not one of whom represented a party or even a group protested. 'What is the use', asked Ramsay MacDonald, 'of talking about coming to the aid of Belgium, when, as a matter of fact, you are engaging in a whole European war which is not going to leave the map of Europe in the position it is in now?'[1] They received a courteous hearing from an audience coldly hostile. In the streets the crowd were singing patriotic songs, and the young men gathering in queues outside the recruiting stations. Next morning, the Prime Minister, without troubling to consult the Cabinet and confident of the silent support of the entire country, authorized Grey to send Sir Edward Goschen a telegram calling upon the German Government to pledge itself before midnight to respect the neutrality of Belgium. What reply could be given? The invasion of Belgium had already begun. Night fell. England entered the war.

Review, January 1929, vol. ccxlii, p. 18) writes as follows: 'Not only were all the civilians for nursing the Expeditionary Force to defend our shores, but so were even some of the soldiers. I have high authority for saying that Lord Roberts, who, as I know, was called in by the Cabinet, wished to hold the Expeditionary Force back, believing then, as he did, in the possibility of immediate invasion. As for Lord Kitchener, invasion was to him, as a former member of the Army Council recently expressed it to me, an "obsession" to the very end.' And finally it is contradicted by Lord Haldane himself whose statement is explicit and detailed: 'I need hardly say that there was never the slightest foundation for the suggestion presently to be launched that I had wished to delay the sending of the Expeditionary Force. I had desired to send off all the six divisions from the outset. Careful consultation with the Admiralty had made it plain that they would guarantee that there would be no practical possibility of serious invasion, and after the War was over I ascertained that the Germans had never thought seriously of attempting it. In the afternoon of Monday (the 3rd) the Prime Minister had asked me to summon a War Council, and to select those who should attend. Among others I summoned Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener, who happened to be in London. The Council proved a little timid about invasion, and did not like the idea of all the six divisions leaving the country, but it decided that four should go at once and that the fifth should follow . . . Sir John French and I wanted all the six to start, but we were in a minority. There was available, as we pointed out, a seventh, the sections of which would have to be brought in part from Egypt.' (R. B. Haldane, *An Autobiography*, pp. 277–8.)

[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons 1914, 5th Series, vol. lxv, p. 1830.

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